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National Heroes and National Identity in the Auchinleck Manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. 19.2.1)

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Abstract

The early fourteenth-century Auchinleck Manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates, 19.2.1) proves paramount in both literary and identity-related political studies. As for the former, it contains twenty-three texts unique to it and several others in their oldest versions; as for the latter, it appears to be part of an attempt to construct a national identity distinct from that of France. This study will first analyse the manuscript's physical aspects, history and relevance in order to determine whether its item selection was carefully planned in order to comply with a specific political agenda. The sole chronicle presented in the collection, *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* will be compared to its reputed sources in order to determine the extent to which it had been reworked and expanded to provide England with illustrious shared historical roots. Since the crusading imagery appears pervasive throughout the collection, all the texts connected with the struggle between Christians and Saracens will be also investigated. An in-depth analysis of *Roland and Vernagu*, *Otuel a Knight* and *King Richard* will be carried out in order to understand whether the Crusades were perceived as crucial in the construction of the English national identity. However, all national eposes need their heroes. These legendary figures serve the purpose of embodying the values considered foundational in a given community. Therefore, the last section will be devoted to those romances featuring English heroes, namely *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, *Beues of Hamtoun* and *Guy of Warwick* in order to uncover the traits of ideal English national heroes and kings.

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Abbreviations

AND	*Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, https://anglo-norman.net/entry/a_1
DIMEV	*The Digital Index of Middle English Verse DIMEV*, https://www.dimev.net/
DMF	*Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500)*, http://zeus.atilf.fr/dmf/
DMLBS	*The Dictionary of Medieval Latin from English Sources*, http://clt.brepolis.net/dmlbs/pages/QuickSearch.aspx
IMEV	*The Index of Middle English Verse,* edited by Carleton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins, New York: Columbia University Press, 1943.
MED	*Middle English Dictionary,* https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary
ODNB	*The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary*, https://www.oed.com

Foreword

The early fourteenth-century Auchinleck Manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS 19.2.1) proves of primary importance in literary, linguistic and translation studies. It contains not only twenty-three texts that are unique to it or in their oldest version, but also an incredibly high number of romances – eighteen – as compared to any other contemporary extant manuscript. Palaeographical and linguistic evidence has allowed the determination of different hands that worked at the transcription of the manuscript, as well as their area of provenance on the grounds of the variety of the language used. This collection thus provides examples of the development of Middle English in different areas of the country. Since several texts also appear to be translations of Anglo-Norman antecedents, this collection is also crucial to the study of translation practice at the beginning of the fourteenth century. However, two additional characteristics have attracted considerable attention: its almost exclusive use of Middle English, as well as its apparent interest for all things English. Thematic and linguistic choices have thus been related to the emergence of a sense of national identity.[1]

More recent studies have somehow downplayed the role played by Middle English in the emergence of a sense of national identity. The prologue to one of the Auchinleck romances, *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, has been attentively scrutinised to find evidence of this manuscript's linguistic stand. The subsequent recasting of the Arthurian legend into Middle English is justified by this redactor with a desire for inclusivity, after all 'euerich Jnglische Jnglische can' (l. 24).[2] Nevertheless, the reading of this line in the context of the whole prologue has proved problematic. Patrick Butler emphasises that this reputed linguistic stand might have been misread. Instead of celebrating Middle English, it would rather lament the loss of French (and Latin) and its tragic consequences. According

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[1] *The Auchinleck Manuscript National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS.19.2.1*, (facsimile edition) with an introduction by Derek Pearsall and I. C. Cunningham, London: The Scolar Press, 1979, pp. vii-xi (henceforth Pearsall, Cunningham). Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, pp. 108-41.

[2] All quotations from the Auchinleck Manuscript have been taken from The *Auchinleck Manuscript*, edited by David Burnley and Alison Wiggins, https://auchinleck.nls.uk/index.html.

to the prologue, 'learning French and Latin means one would have no need to spill blood. It follows that those who can speak only English might be prone to spilling more blood than necessary. Previous readings of the Prologue have interpreted the sentiments towards English as positive, but the association between language-learning and violence complicates such a position.'[3]

Further scholarly attention has been devoted to the identification of the historical and cultural circumstances that determined the emergence of a sense of national identity. In his 1996 seminal book *England the Nation*, Thorlac Turville-Petre associates the rise of nationalism with the rise of Middle English.[4] Hugh Thomas questions this association by tracing back the emergence of a sense of national identity well before the turn of the fourteenth century. Feelings of a distinctly English identity thus 'grew up at a time when the culturally dominant language in England was French, and some of its early manifestations were written in that language. So it is not to be identified with the English language. There was a distinct English identity even when the upper classes spoke French.'[5] According to Laura Ashe, not only did this sense of national identity emerge in the early years of the Norman conquest, but it was also fostered by the influence that England had on the Normans: 'it is the land, as envisioned and embodied in certain texts, which is the binding principle behind nationality.'[6] In her study of the Auchinleck translation of *Gui de Warewic,* Ivana Djordjević furthers these linguistic reflections by highlighting that several passages which have been considered as evidence of the open nationalism of the Middle English version were already present in the Anglo-Norman original. She thus concludes that: 'Guy of Warwick, rather than becoming English in translation is a hero who is English from his very conception. In the context of thirteenth- and fourteenth century linguistic nationalism the translated poem is *used* for its Englishness, but it is not *changed* to fit this purpose.'[7]

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[3] Patrick Butler, 'A Failure to Communicate: Multilingualism in the Prologue to *Of Arthour and of Merlin*', in *The Auchinleck Manuscript: New Perspectives*, edited by Susanna Fein, York: York Medieval Press, 2018, p. 54.
[4] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 20.
[5] Hugh M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity 1066 – c. 1220*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 242.
[6] Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066-1200*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 94-5.
[7] Ivana Djordjević, 'Nation and Translation: Guy of Warwick between Languages', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 57 (2013), p. 139.

To complicate the matter further, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, England was far from having achieved any linguistic unity not only because part of the aristocracy still used Anglo-Norman, but also due to the presence of different regional varieties.[8] Therefore, it is in the role of political propaganda that any attempt to identify the language with the nation should be sought. One crucial question in the current study will thus be whether, in the context of the Auchinleck Manuscript, Middle English is described as the language of the English. The linguistic speculation is highly consequential, as it is not limited to the identification of a sole national language, but rather involves another crucial aspect of national identity: the role of vernacular literature in promoting the values that are perceived as foundational in a given community.[9] The prologue to another romance from the Auchinleck collection, *King Richard*, appears to emphasise the importance of reporting the deeds of the 'douȝti kniȝtes of Inglond' (l. 28) in the language which is perceived as the most appropriate to celebrate the English long-standing heroic tradition: Middle English. This prologue thus seems to imply some sort of awareness of a connection between language, literature and nation.

The sole chronicle of the Auchinleck collection seems to broaden the scope of the linguistic issue even further. *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* sets out to report the history of England from its mythical foundation to almost contemporary events in the English language, thus emphasising an additional connection between language and shared historical roots.

> Here may men rede whoso can
> Hou Jnglond first bigan.
> Men mow it finde jn Englische
> As þe Brout it telleþ, ywis. (ll. 1-4)

History has widely been acknowledged as a power instrument in the creation of a sense of national identity and the combination of language and history can only further reinforce the sense of pride in one's illustrious roots.[10] The reference to the *Brut* not only allows the appropriation of a pre-existing tradition, but also emphasises from the very beginning England's connection with the most prestigious historical setting of all: that of the Trojan War. Yet, history itself is not exempt from

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[8] Tim William Machan, *English in the Middle Ages*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 71-110.
[9] D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1987, p. 26.
[10] Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 22.

controversy. The history of England has certainly not evolved continuously since its mythical foundation, but was rather disrupted by successive invasions. Therefore, English identity can only be the result of negotiation between the identities of those populations who successively inhabited England: Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Normans. In the Auchinleck Manuscript, the portrait of the heroes of the Matter of England can only reflect the complexity inherent in the definition of a national identity in such a fluid context. This definition is further complicated by the set of competing alliances that each of these heroes establishes with his own country, king, fellow-knights and God.

However, in spite of the considerable enthusiasm for English language, literature, history and geography apparent in the item selection, this is not evidence in itself of a deliberate project aimed at complying with the specific requests of a patron. The intentionality of the project, the identification of the intended audience, the linguistic and thematic choices are thus all crucial aspects in the current study as they allow the analysis of the texts to be framed in a specific historical, political and cultural context. *National Heroes and National Identity in the Auchinleck Manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. 19.2.1)* sets out to explore the way wherein the texts of this manuscript interpret and re-interpret pre-existing traditions in order to convey a specific idea of Englishness, whose traits will be investigated in the light of the complex political situation characterising early-fourteenth century England.

Since nothing is known of the patron who commissioned such a collection or even of its purpose, one can only rely on textual and physical evidence in order to get an insight into the circumstances of the manuscript's creation. Chapter 1 is thus entirely devoted to the analysis of the physical characteristics of the manuscript, its extant illuminations, the booklet structure, the item numbering as well as the combination of the work of its five-to-six scribes in order to determine whether this collection was carefully planned. Palaeographical and codicological evidence allows the identification of the decade in which the manuscript was compiled; nevertheless, its subsequent story is surrounded by mystery. The first information available in fact dates back to the eighteenth century, when the manuscript was finally rediscovered. Therefore, a section of Chapter 1 is also devoted to

the study of the marginalia scattered throughout the manuscript in order to uncover details about its reception across the centuries as well as the names of possible owners. Since the identity of the patron of such a collection appears of crucial importance in determining whether it might have been deliberately conceived to mirror the contemporary political propaganda about national identity, this issue will be explored in the subsequent chapters as well.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the analysis of the sole chronicle contained in Auchinleck manuscript, *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*. This expanded version of the *Liber Regum Angliae* appears to reinvent the history of England in order to construct shared historical roots and a precise idea of national identity. The etymological interest for the different names of the country gives the Auchinleck redactor the opportunity to reduplicate the foundation myth, so much so that the story of the Trojan Brutus is preceded by that of the Greek Albina, thus essentially reinforcing the customary *translatio imperii*. In the early fourteenth century, the strategy of legitimisation of Norman rule appears to have changed. It did not involve the degradation of the previous Anglo-Saxon monarchs any longer, but rather their extensive celebration in order to include the contemporary Plantagenet kings in the country's historical line of greatness. This choice proved highly consequential. In order to comply with the general political agenda, the Auchinleck version of the Arthurian legend transforms the customary Saxon opponents into Saracens, as they appear to be conveniently exempt from any nationalistic speculation. Chapter 2 is also devoted to the comparison of the portrait of legendary and historical kings offered by the *Chronicle* with its reputed sources in order to highlight the extent to which they have been meticulously reworked to provide a particular view of the country's history as well as of ideal kingship.

Chapter 3 investigates the texts staging the struggle between Christians and Saracens. Although the word 'Saracen' appears pervasive throughout the collection, a close analysis of its occurrences reveals that it is often used to identify enemies in general. Nevertheless, a group of poems is certainly associated with the Crusades. No international Crusader army is reported to have set sail to the Holy Land in the fourteenth century and yet this theme might still have been perceived as one of extreme

importance. Therefore, the first section of Chapter 3 is entirely devoted to the investigation of the perception of the Crusades at the dawn of the final loss of the Holy Land.

The texts staging the feats of Charlemagne and his *douzepers* might offer an insight into the English interpretation of the Matter of France. The French kings had in fact always considered themselves as the leaders of a chosen people entrusted by God Himself with the role of defenders of the faith. Since Charlemagne was considered a French proto-crusader, he could provide the Capetian kings with an unchallengeable claim to Crusade leadership. Therefore, in order to imitate or even challenge the French position, the English propaganda should identify a local crusade leader as well as offer a new take on the Carolingian king. Therefore, *Roland and Vernagu* and *Otuel a Kniȝt* will be analysed in order to uncover the traits of ideal kingship outlined in the figure of Charlemagne. These reflections seem to converge into the portrait of King Richard, who offers a possible English counterpart to the French historical and literary crusading leadership. Richard Plantagenet was hailed not only as an ideal king and a defender of his country's reputation, but also as a champion of Christianity that could claim his righteous place amongst the Nine Worthies. The analysis of the abovementioned texts is thus aimed at determining the means whereby the crusader identity has become a crucial part of the English national identity.

Chapter 4 deals with the possible romantic core of the whole of the Auchinleck collection. In *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, *Beues of Hamtoun* and *Guy of Warwick*, the aristocratic concerns related to the administration of justice and the redefinition of royal power are highlighted alongside the description of the characteristics of good and bad kings and counsellors. Loyalty between knights and towards one's lord seems to convey a specific portrait of the English national hero. In *Of Arthur and of Merlin*, the Arthurian legend is transformed into a political arena in which subsequent succession crises are staged. The emphasis on succession rights gives the opportunity to reflect on the characteristics inherent in a good king. *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, *Beues of Hamtoun* and *Guy of Warwick* are all set in pre-conquest England, thus essentially celebrating England's past greatness. Both *Horn Childe* and *Beues of Hamtoun* are characterised by

a narrative pattern of dispossession and lawful regaining of the hero's inheritance; nevertheless, they reveal completely different portraits of English heroes and kings. Horn is in fact a conqueror who succeeds in regaining as well as increasing his father's possessions. Beues equally restores his properties in England only to relinquish them to one of his old friends. Furthermore, his life is characterised by continuous struggles culminating in his lifelong exile. Yet, it is only in *Guy of Warwick* that the effort to identify an English national identity reaches its height. 'Gij þe Cristen', 'Gij þe conquerour', 'Gij þe curteys', 'Gij þe fre', 'Gij þe gode kniȝt', 'Gij þe englisse' and finally 'Guy the Saint' are all part of the multifaced identity of the hero and consequently of the English. The romance is structured as some sort of journey towards the understanding of the true meaning of chivalry. Guy of Warwick thus takes on the role of the perfect national hero, embodying the very idea of the English *miles Christi*, more prompted by religious devotion than by the canons of courtly love.

1 Physical Description

The impressive manuscript known as the Auchinleck Manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates, 19.2.1) is a collection of forty-four texts almost exclusively in Middle English allegedly compiled in the 1330s.[1] In its present condition, it is composed of 12 booklets each made of 1 to 9 quires, thus making 47 eight-leave quires in all.[2] The manuscript contains 331 vellum leaves of 250 x 190mm in size. Nonetheless, it is believed to have contained more than 386 leaves as many of them appear to have been lost.[3] A few missing folios have been retrieved, some of them in the binding of other books: Edinburgh University Library MS 218, consisting of two separate bifolia containing a fragment of *The Life of Adam and Eve* and a fragment of *King Richard*; St Andrews University Library MS PR.2065 A.15 containing a fragment of *Kyng Alisaunder* and R.4 containing a fragment of *King Richard*; London University Library MS 593, containing another fragment of *Kyng Alisaunder*. The St Andrews fragments are crucial in determining the original size of the manuscript – 264 x 203 mm – as they appear to have been removed before the trimming of the pages took place. The fairly high quality of the vellum as well as the size of the manuscript might suggest that this was meant to be a rather expensive production.[4] Five to six scribes are believed to have contributed to the transcription of the texts, even though one of them appears to have copied the largest part of the collection and thus possibly acted as its supervisor.[5] The following table summarises the distribution of the forty-four items over the booklets and provides some details regarding the scribe who was in charge of copying the texts, as well as the language/s used.[6]

[1] Derek Pearsall, 'The Auchinleck Manuscript Forty Years On', in *The Auchinleck Manuscript: New Perspectives*, edited by Susanna Fein, York: York Medieval Press, 2018, p. 13.
[2] A 'booklet' or 'fascicle' is defined as a codicological unit made of 'a group of leaves forming at least one quire, but more likely several, and presenting a self-contained group of texts.' Ralph Hanna, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts: Further Considerations', *Studies in Bibliography*, 39 (1986), pp. 100-1.
[3] Pearsall, Cunningham, p. xi. Since some of these losses have left their traces on the surviving quires, it has been possible to identify 57 missing leaves either in the form of entire bifolia or single leaves. Margaret Connolly, A. S. G. Edwards, 'Evidence for the History of the Auchinleck Manuscript', *The Library*, 18 (2017), p. 293.
[4] Pearsall, Cunningham, p. vii; Connolly, Edwards, 'Evidence for the History of the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 297.
[5] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p. 113.
[6] All information summarised in the following tables are derived from Pearsall, Cunningham, pp. vii-xvi and *The Auchinleck Manuscript*, edited by David Burnley and Alison Wiggins, http://auchinleck.nls.uk/ [accessed on 01/12/20]

Booklet	Quire	Folio[7]	Item No[8]	Title	Language	Folio – detail	Scribe
1	1	4 leaves missing					
1	1, 2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6a (stub), 6	1 (6)	**The Legend of Pope Gregory**	Middle English	1r-6v f.6Ar/f.6Av (stub)	Scribe 1
1	2, 3	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	2 (7)	**The King of Tars**	Middle English	7ra-13vb	Scribe 1
1	3, 4	missing, Ef.1, Ef.2, missing, 14, 15, 16	3 (8)	**The Life of Adam and Eve**	Middle English	Edinburgh University Library MS 218 fols.1ra-2vb; NLS Adv 19.2.1 fols.14ra-16rb	Scribe 1
1	4	17, 18, 19, 20, 21	4 (9)	**Seynt Mergrete**	Middle English	16rb-21ra	Scribe 1
1	4, 5	22, 23, 24, 24a (stub)	5 (10)	**Seynt Katerine**	Middle English	21ra-24vb 24a stub	Scribe 1
1	5, 6	25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31	6 (11)	**St Patrick's Purgatory**	Middle English	25ra-31vb	Scribe 1
1	6	32, 33, 34, 35 (stub)	7 (12)	**þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi & þe Soule**	Middle English, Latin (only labels)	31vb-35ra	Scribe 1
1	6	36, 37 (stub)	8 (13)	**The Harrowing of Hell**	Middle English, Latin (only labels)	35rb-?37rb or 37va stub	Scribe 1
1	6	38	9 (14)	**The Clerk who would see the Virgin**	Middle English	?37rb or 37va stub-38vb	Scribe 1
2	7	39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46	10 (15)	**Speculum Gy de Warewyke**	Middle English, Latin (17 lines)	39ra-?48rb stub	Scribe 2

[7] Since some texts either share the same page, occupying one the recto and the other the verso, or even the same side of a folio, the numbers indicated in the third column of the table are only indicative. Column seven provides the exact distribution of the texts.
[8] The item numbers still visible in the manuscript are reported in brackets.

Booklet	Quire	Folio	Item No	Title	Language	Folio – detail	Scribe
2	**8**	47					
		48 (stub)					
		49	11 (16)	**Amis and Amiloun**	Middle English	48rb stub-?61va stub	Scribe 1
		50					
		51					
		52					
		53					
		54					
	9	55					
		56					
		57					
		58					
		59					
		60					
		61					
		61a (stub)	12 (17)	**The Life of St Mary Magdalene**	Middle English	61Ava stub-65vb	Scribe 1
	10	62					
		63					
		64					
		65					
		66	13 (17)	**The Nativity and Early Life of Mary**	Middle English	65vb-69va	Scribe 1
		67					
		68					
		69					
3	**11**	70	14 (21)	**On the Seven Deadly Sins**	Middle English	70ra-72ra	Scribe 3
		71					
		72					
		72a (stub)	15 (22)	**The Paternoster**	Middle English, Latin (8 lines)	72ra-?72rb or ?72va stub	Scribe 3
		73	16 (23)	**The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin**	Middle English	72rb or ?72va stub-78ra	Scribe 3
		74					
		75					
		76					
	12	77					
		78					
		79	17 (24)	**Sir Degare**	Middle English	78rb-?84rb stub	Scribe 3
		80					
		81					
		82					
		83					
		84					
	13	84a (stub)	18 (25)	**The Seven Sages of Rome**	Middle English	84rb stub-99vb	Scribe 3
		85					
		86					
		87					
		88					
		89					
		90					
		91					
	14	92					
		93					
		94					
		95					
		96					
		97					
		98					
		99					
	15	0	Gathering missing (c 1400 lines of text)				
	16	100	19 (26)	**Floris and Blancheflour**	Middle English	100ra-104vb	Scribe 3
		101					
		102					
		103					
		104					

Booklet	Quire	Folio	Item No	Title	Language	Folio – detail	Scribe
3	**16**	105	20 (26)	**The Sayings of the Four Philosophers**	Middle English + 10 lines in macaronic English-French	105ra-105rb	Scribe 2
		106	21 (27)	**The Battle Abbey Roll**	List of names	105v-107r	Scribe 4
		107					
4	**17**	107a (stub)	f.107Ar / f.107Av (thin stub)				
		108	22 (28)	**Guy of Warwick (couplets)**	Middle English	108ra-146vb	Scribe 1
		109					
		110					
		111					
		112					
		113					
		114					
	18	115					
		116					
		117					
		118					
		118a (stub)					
		119					
		120					
		120a (stub)					
	19	121					
		122					
		123					
		124					
		125					
		126					
		127					
		128					
	20	129					
		130					
		131					
		132					
		133					
		134					
		135					
		136					
	21	137					
		138					
		139					
		140					
		141					
		142					
		143					
		144					
	22	145					
		146					
		147	23 (28)	**Guy of Warwick (stanzas)**	Middle English	145vb-167rb	Scribe 1
		148					
		149					
		150					
		151					
		152					
	23	153					
		154					
		155					
		156					
		157					
		158					
		159					

Booklet	Quire	Folio	Item No	Title	Language	Folio – detail	Scribe
4		160	23 (28)	**Guy of Warwick (stanzas)**	Middle English	145vb-167rb	Scribe 1
	24	161					
		162					
		163					
		164					
		165					
		166					
		167					
		168	24 (29)	**Reinbroun**	Middle English	167rb-175vb	Scribe 5
	25	169					
		170					
		171					
		172					
		173					
		174					
		175					
		missing	leaf missing				
5	**26**	176	25 (30)	**Sir Beues of Hamtoun**	Middle English	176ra-201ra	Scribe 5
		177					
		178					
		179					
		180					
		181					
		182					
		183					
	27	184					
		185					
		186					
		187					
		188					
		missing					
		189					
		190					
	28	191					
		192					
		193					
		194					
		195					
		196					
		197					
		198					
	29	199					
		200					
		201					
		202	26 (31)	**Of Arthour & of Merlin**	Middle English	201rb-256vb	Scribe 1
		203					
		204					
		205					
		206					
	30	207					
		208					
		209					
		210					
		211					
		212					
		213					
		214					
	31	215					
		216					
		217					
		218					
		219					
		220					
		221					
		222					

Booklet	Quire	Folio	Item No	Title	Language	Folio – detail	Scribe
5	**32**	223	26 (31)	**Of Arthour & of Merlin**	Middle English	201rb-256vb	Scribe 1
		224					
		225					
		226					
		227					
		228					
		229					
		230					
	33	231					
		232					
		233					
		234					
		235					
		236					
		237					
		238					
	34	239					
		240					
		241					
		242					
		243					
		244					
		245					
		246					
	35	247					
		248					
		249					
		250					
		251					
		252					
		253					
		254					
	36	missing					
		255					
		256					
		256a (stub)	27	**þe Wenche þat Loved þe King**	Middle English	256vb-256A thin stub	Scribe 1
		257	28 (33)	**A Peniworþ of Witt**	Middle English	256A stub-259rb	Scribe 1
		258					
		259					
		260	29 (34)	**How Our Lady's Sauter was First Found**	Middle English	259rb-260vb	Scribe 1
6	**37**	261	30 (35)	**Lay le Freine**	Middle English	261ra-262A thin stub	Scribe 1
		262					
		262a (stub)	31 (36)	**Roland and Vernagu**	Middle English	262va stub-267vb	Scribe 1
		263					
		264					
		265					
		266					
		267					
7	**38**	268	32 (37)	**Otuel a Kniȝt**	Middle English	268ra-277vb	Scribe 6
		269					
		270					
		271					
		272					
		273					
		274					
		275					
		276					
		277					
	39		missing (possibly other missing quires)				

Booklet	Quire	Folio	Item No	Title	Language	Folio – detail	Scribe
8	40 41	missing missing Lf.1 S A.15 S.A.15 Lf.2 missing missing 278	33 (44)	**Kyng Alisaunder**	Middle English	L f.1ra-vb; S A.15 f.1ra-2vb; L f.2ra-vb; fols.278-9	Scribe 1
8	41	279	34	**The Thrush and the Nightingale**	Middle English	279va-vb	Scribe 1
8	41	missing missing missing missing missing	5 leaves missing				
8	41	280	35	**The Sayings of St Bernard**	Middle English	280ra	Scribe 1
8	41	280	36	**Dauid þe King**	Middle English, Latin (20 lines)	280rb-280vb	Scribe 1
9	42 43 44	281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299	37 (51)	**Sir Tristrem**	Middle English	281ra-299A thin stub	Scribe 1
9	44	299a (stub) 300 301 302	38 (52)	**Sir Orfeo**	Middle English	299A stub-303ra	Scribe 1
9	44	303	39 (52)	**The Four Foes of Mankind**	Middle English	303rb-303vb	Scribe 1
10	45 46	304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317	40 (53)	**The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle**	Middle English, French (7 lines)	304ra-317rb	Scribe 1

Booklet	Quire	Folio	Item No	Title	Language	Folio – detail	Scribe
10	**46**	318	41 (54)	**Horn Childe & Maiden Rimnild**	Middle English	317va-323vb	Scribe 1
		319					
	47	320					
		321					
		missing					
		322					
		323					
		missing	leaf missing				
		324	42 (55)	**Alphabetical Praise of Women**	Middle English	324ra-325vb	Scribe 1
		325					
11	**48**	326	43 (56)	**King Richard**	Middle English	f.326; E f.3ra-vb; S R.4 f.1ra-2vb; E f.4ra-vb; f.327	Scribe 1
		E.f.3					
		missing					
		SR.4					
		SR.4					
		missing					
		E.f.4					
		327					
	49	missing	Many leaves lost				
	50	missing					
	51	missing					
12	**52**	328	44	**þe Simonie**	Middle English	328r-334v	Scribe 2
		329					
		330					
		331					
		332					
		333					
		334					
		missing					

1.1 Number of Scribes

There is no agreement on the number of scribes who worked on the Auchinleck Manuscript, as several theories have been advanced over the past seven decades. A. J. Bliss postulates that six hands are recognisable.[9] In particular, *Otuel a Kniȝt,* which occupies the entire Booklet 7, would be the sole effort of Scribe 6. Bliss's hypothesis is grounded in the meticulous analysis of the features of each scribe.

> Scribes 1 and 6 wrote straightforward, legible bookhands; Scribe 2 wrote a formal, almost liturgical bookhand, […] Scribe 3 wrote a cursive hand in which the length of *f, r* and long *s* […] shows the influence of chancery hand; the hand of Scribe 5 is very ugly and disjointed […]. The only hands which bear even a superficial resemblance to each other are those of scribes 1 and 6.[10]

Although Scribe 1 and 6 might write resemblant hands, they exhibit in fact several different characteristics. On a palaeographical ground, Bliss identifies eight diacritic letters which present substantially different realisations by the two scribes: *a* (Scribe 1: left side with a double loop; Scribe

[9] A. J. Bliss, 'Notes on the Auchinleck Manuscript', *Speculum,* 26 (1951), p. 652.
[10] Bliss, 'Notes on the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 653.

6: left side straight), *d* (Scribe 1: long final stroke; Scribe 6: short final stroke), *e* (Scribe 1: sometimes completed with a final stroke running out and up; Scribe 6: never completed with a cross stroke), *s* (Scribe 1: long *s* often used finally; Scribe 6: long *s* never used finally), *t* (Scribe 1: the vertical stroke of *t* only rises above the horizontal in the group *tt*; Scribe 6: the vertical stroke always rises above the horizontal), *þ* (Scribe 1: with straight descender; Scribe 6: with descender curving to the left), *y* (Scribe 1: undotted; Scribe 6: dotted), *z* (Scribe 1: without cross stroke; Scribe 6: with cross-stroke).[11] Furthermore, the system of orthography appears to be specific to each scribe, but consistent throughout their work, in spite of the particular dialect that might have characterised their sources.[12] Alison Wiggins furthers Bliss's assumption by using dialect evidence. Since *Otuel a Kniȝt* appears to have been composed in a South-West Midlands dialect instead of the London variety used by Scribe 1, it must have been written by a different person.[13] Furthermore, the ruling of the page as well as the number of folios contained in the relevant quire are different.[14] As for the former, Scribe 6 appears to have been inaccurate in conforming to the forty-four-line standard set by Scribe 1, as folio 268r presents forty-three lines, whereas folio 277r presents forty-two lines. As for the latter, the relevant booklet contains a single quire of 10 folios instead of the standard 8 characterising any other quire in the manuscript.

According to Ralph Hanna, these peculiarities cannot be used as evidence of a different hand; therefore, in his eyes, what was believed to be the sole effort of Scribe 6, is in fact yet another item copied by Scribe 1.[15]

> Certain of these anomalies are not such at all. The hand here is in fact the well-attested Auchinleck Scribe 1, merely writing in a different duct, although with some variation in the number of lines to the page (the usual 44 *and* 43). Moreover, it is unclear whether the linguistic variation offers any particular purchase in this context.[16]

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[11] Bliss, 'Notes on the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 653.
[12] Bliss, 'Notes on the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 654.
[13] Alison Wiggins, 'Are Auchinleck Manuscript Scribes 1 and 6 the same scribe? The Advantage of Whole-Data Analysis and Electronic Texts', *Medium Ævum,* 73 (2004), p. 12.
[14] Pearsall, Cunningham, p. xiv.
[15] Ralph Hanna, 'Auchinleck "Scribe 6" and Some Corollary Issues', in *The Auchinleck Manuscript: New Perspectives,* edited by Susanna Fein, York: York Medieval Press, 2018, p. 210.
[16] Hanna, 'Auchinleck "Scribe 6"', p. 210.

Hanna supports his hypothesis by emphasising that since the Auchinleck appears to be such a comprehensive repository of pieces of literature, *Otuel a Kniȝt* might have originally been copied by Scribe 1 for another collection and only at a later stage perceived as suitable for the Auchinleck Manuscript.[17] This would explain the different number of leaves in quire 38, the absence of a catchword at the end of it,[18] as well as the different dialect used. Although Scribe 1 might have extensively translated the texts originally planned to be included in the Auchinleck in the London variety, he might not have been used doing so for other productions. In these specific circumstances, he might thus have decided to copy this text exactly as it was.[19] No final word has yet been said as to the number of scribes that contributed to the creation of this manuscript; however, this was certainly a fairly structured enterprise. The study of the collaboration amongst the scribes might thus cast a new light not only on this specific manuscript, but more in general, on the process of book production in the early fourteenth century.

1.2 Circumstances of the Manuscript's Creation

The practical details of the scribes' collaboration have also been much debated. In her 1942 seminal article, Laura Hibbard Loomis postulates that the manuscript was produced in a London bookshop. Her hypothesis is grounded in several parallels and textual borrowings especially across the romances from this collection. In her view, the scribes would have worked in close contact and could have consulted one another on the order of the items or even on their layout.[20] According to Bliss, Loomis's hypothesis could also be supported by the analysis of catchwords. Most of the catchwords would be written by Scribe 1.[21] The only catchword written by Scribe 4 for the sake of Scribe 1 would

[17] Hanna, 'Auchinleck "Scribe 6"', p. 211.
[18] Wiggins emphasises that the absence of a catchword at the end of the quire could be used as further evidence of the existence of Scribe 6. Wiggins, 'Are Auchinleck Manuscript Scribes 1 and 6 the same scribe?', pp. 19-20.
[19] Hanna, 'Auchinleck "Scribe 6"', p. 211.
[20] Laura Hibbard Loomis, 'The Auchinleck Manuscript and a Possible London Bookshop of 1330-1340', *PMLA,* 57 (1942), pp. 595-627.
[21] There is no agreement on whether the catchwords were in fact written by different scribes. According to Shonk, all the catchwords were written by Scribe 1, whereas for Bliss, Scribes 3 and 4 added a catchword at the end of quire 14 and 16 respectively. Timothy A. Shonk, 'A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript: Bookmen and Bookmaking in the Early Fourteenth Century', *Speculum,* 60 (1985), p. 84; Bliss, 'Notes on the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 657.

demonstrate not only a close collaboration amongst the scribes, but also their physical proximity, so much so that they could easily consult one another.[22] Pamela Robinson's theory stems from Loomis's hypothesis, as she postulates that the manuscript might have been a fascicular production. The scribes are thus assumed to have compiled independent booklets, subsequently put together according to the taste of a specific customer.[23] In his introduction to the facsimile edition, Derek Pearsall seems to accept Robinson's conclusion that the Auchinleck Manuscript was thus not originally intended as a whole, but rather as a set of independent booklets, later assembled to comply with a customer's requirements.[24]

However, on folio 114r the traces of a historiated large initial, a letter 'L' – possibly the beginning of the word 'Lordinges' – are still visible. The shadowy figure of a mounted knight seems to emerge from the parchment page (Plate 9), thus possibly implying that this letter was conceived as the opening of a romance. An attentive analysis of the booklet construction reveals that the only missing folio in this gathering (107a stub) is that at the very beginning of Booklet 4. Since the number sequence is respected, it is unlikely that any item is missing from this booklet. It is thus possible to conclude that the historiated initial belonged to a booklet other than Booklet 4. It might consequently have been illuminated alongside some other booklets either belonging to a different manuscript or to the Auchinleck Manuscript itself. Additional evidence might be detected on folio 31r. On the top right-hand side of the page the negative of a decorated large 'H' can still be identified. Unlike the previous historiated 'L', the original decorated 'H' has survived and corresponds to the opening of the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* (Plate 10). The two folios belong to different booklets (Booklet 1 and Booklet 10 respectively) thus possibly reinforcing the idea that the whole manuscript had at least partially been devised to be a sole collection. The hypothesis that unbound booklets were already available to a customer selection would imply that for some reasons at least two couples of booklets had been simultaneously produced and subsequently accidentally assembled

[22] Bliss, 'Notes on the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 657.
[23] Shonk, 'A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 72.
[24] Pearsall, Cunningham, p. ix.

in the same manuscript. The low probability of two such conditions occurring at the same time might give way to the possibility that the booklets composing the Auchinleck Manuscript did not exist as self-standing units available on demand for the customers of a bookshop, but were rather part of a carefully planned collection of texts extending well beyond the booklet itself.[25]

In his 1985 article, Timothy A. Shonk posits that the content of the manuscript might have been previously selected by a patron. Scribe 1 would have taken the commission for such a production and thus searched the collaboration of other scribes who might not have been in close contact with him, but rather in different locations, possibly under his loose supervision.[26] Shonk also sketches a possible reconstruction of the order in which the scribes copied the texts to demonstrate that even though they did not copy single gatherings, but rather 'complete works', they worked independently, thus implying that close contact was unnecessary.

> As the order of the copying suggests, there is no reason why any of the scribes should have worked in close proximity to another. In fact, the evidence points to just the opposite. The scribes did not copy in the form of individual gatherings. They seem to have written complete works rather than a few segments of a single original. It is logical to assume that they did this work independently, since they did not need to be in direct contact with the other scribes.[27]

Given that the Auchinleck Manuscript appears a very expensive production,[28] Turville-Petre has more recently argued that there might hardly have been a 'steady demand' for collections of this kind, it must have rather been commissioned by a prosperous family.[29] Due to the paucity of evidence on

[25] In his 1986 article, Ralph Hanna emphasises that what distinguishes 'the booklet from other forms of production [is] the postponement of any overall plan for a finished book, in some cases until after production has ceased.' However, in some cases, such as the Auchinleck, careful planning appears to have been made well before the conclusion of the process. Ralph Hanna, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscript: Further Considerations', pp. 103; 107.
[26] Shonk, 'A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 73. The division in units or booklets was a suitable way of constructing large collections out of a series of shorter sections, as well as of sharing the work amongst different scribes with no need for proximity. Julia Boffey, John J. Thompson, 'Anthologies and Miscellanies: Production and Choice of Texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, edited by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 281. Ralph Hanna, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscript: Further Considerations', *Studies in Bibliography*, 39 (1986), pp. 101-2.
[27] Shonk, 'A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript', pp. 74-5.
[28] 'Of particular interest are its almost exclusive use of English and its relatively plain appearance when compared with such sumptuous volumes as the Ellesmere Chaucer or the Morgan Library Troilus Criseyde.' Shonk, 'A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 72. One might argue that the manuscripts mentioned by Shonk are both fifteenth-century productions. However, although he labels the Auchinleck as a 'plain' manuscript, he admits that it must have 'demanded a huge economic gamble'. Shonk, 'A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 89.
[29] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 113.

book production and trade prior to the age of Chaucer, it might be worth turning to textual evidence in order to gather more details on the creation of this manuscript.

According to Alison Wiggins, *Guy of Warwick* is crucial to the understanding of the construction of this manuscript.[30] In the Auchinleck Manuscript, the story of the eponymous hero is divided into three parts: the first part, in couplets, reports Guy's knightly adventures, the second Guy's repentance and pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and the third is about Guy's son, Reinbroun. Both the second and the third parts are in 12-line tail-rhyme stanzas. This change in metre was explained by Hibbard Loomis with a possible innovation brought by a single scribe in the context of a bookshop production. The text would have thus been translated and reworked at the same time by a 'collaborative team' possibly in order to be divided into smaller sections, more suitable for oral recitation.[31] However, it might be worth emphasising that each of these sections is linguistically distinct from the other two. The first part, written in the London dialect, seems in fact to be quite similar, in linguistic terms, to *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, *Kyng Alisaunder*, and *King Richard*.[32] This implies that the scribe must at least have been familiar with the characteristics of these texts.[33] The second and the third parts are conversely composed in East-Midland dialects intermingled with some features of Northern dialects.[34] Furthermore, the computer-based analysis of the stanzaic *Guy of Warwick* carried out by Alison Wiggins seems to reveal several idiosyncrasies, as the text contains a significantly large amount of alliteration as well as highly formulaic language as compared to the first part of *Guy of*

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30 Alison Wiggins, 'Imagining the Compiler: Guy of Warwick and the Compilation of the Auchinleck Manuscript', in *Imagining the Book*, edited by Stephen Kelly and John J. Thompson, Turnhout: Brepols, 2005, p. 61.
31 Wiggins, 'Imagining the Compiler', p. 62.
32 On the grounds of the similarities amongst these texts, a common authorship has been suggested. Pearsall, Cunningham, p. xi. All the texts in the Auchinleck Manuscript appear to be anonymous except *Sir Tristrem*. By combining the catchword placed at the end of Booklet 8, folio 280v, 'y was at Erþeldoun' with the first surviving lines of the poem, 'Wiþ Tomas spak y þare | Þer herd y rede in roune |Who Tristrem gat & bare' (ll. 1-4), it is possible to infer that it was written by one Thomas of Erceldoune. Very little is known about this poet. He appears to have been active in the late thirteenth century in the Borders region of Scotland. He is also mentioned by Robert Mannyng de Brunne in his *Chronicle* as an example of refined style, 'I see in song, in sedgeyng tale | Of Erceldoun & of Kendale: | Non þam says as þai þam wroght, | & in þer saying it semes noght.| Þat may þou here in sir Tristrem, ouer gestes it has þ esteem | ouer alle þat is or was | if men it sayd as made Thomas.' (ll. 93-100). Joyce Coleman, 'Strange Rhyme: Prosody and Nationhood in Robert Mannyng's "Story of England"', *Speculum*, 78 (2003), pp. 1219-20; Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *The Chronicle*, edited by Idelle Sullens, Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996.
33 Wiggins, 'Imagining the Compiler', p. 63.
34 Wiggins, 'Imagining the Compiler', p. 64.

Warwick and *Reinbroun*.[35] These inconsistencies as well as a feeble attempt to connect the sections would run against the possibility of a close cooperation amongst the scribes.[36] The division into three sections might not have been prompted by the need for shorter texts more suitable for oral delivery, but rather by that to gather all available material to provide the most complete story of Guy of Warwick.[37] However, one should also consider that the three texts presented in the Auchinleck Manuscript closely follow the original Anglo-Norman *Gui de Warewic*, except for *Reinbroun,* whose deeds are not narrated in a separate romance – like in the Auchinleck version – but rather scattered throughout the account of Guy's life after his marriage.

The abrupt change in Scribe 1's handwriting between the couplet and the stanzaic *Guy of Warwick* would demonstrate that a certain amount of time had passed before the source exemplar for the second part became available.[38] Therefore, Scribe 1 might not have been the coordinator of a bookshop, but rather a book producer with many contacts in the book trade, which allowed him to gather source manuscripts at need. Therefore, Wiggins's hypothesis would undermine the assumption that this manuscript was the production of a London bookshop and would conversely demonstrate the presence of 'networks of textual exchange within and around London in the 1330s.'[39]

1.3 Textual Arrangement

Although the rationale behind the item order is still speculative, it appears to be closely connected to the role of each scribe. Many scholars have emphasised the role of Scribe 1 as the architect of the whole collection,[40] possibly due to the preponderance of his work over that of his collaborators. He appears in fact to have copied some seventy percent of the whole collection. However, instead of focusing on the role of Scribe 1, Emily Runde looks at the work of Scribe 3 for evidence of a literary project. Scribe 3 appears to have single-handedly supervised the assembling of Booklet 3. The *mise*

[35] Wiggins, 'Imagining the Compiler', p. 66.
[36] Wiggins, 'Imagining the Compiler', p. 70.
[37] Wiggins, 'Imagining the Compiler', p. 73.
[38] Wiggins, 'Imagining the Compiler', p. 71.
[39] Wiggins, 'Imagining the Compiler', p. 73.
[40] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 113.

en page of 33 to 38 lines instead of the 44 usually used by Scribe 1[41] would reinforce the idea that this booklet was produced with a 'significant degree of independence' from Scribe 1's supervision.[42] It might even have been produced separately – like Booklet 7 – and then made consistent with the rest of the collection by the addition of the item number at the top of the page, as well as of an evidently unplanned illustration at the beginning of *The Paternoster* (Plate 2).[43] Ralph Hanna furthers this point by arguing that not only does Scribe 3 appear to be the sole identifiable hand that was not in touch with Scribe 1, but he also has a documentary rather than a 'formal training', thus possibly implying that he was not exclusively involved in the business of book production.[44] However, since the copying of Booklet 3 was carried out not only by Scribe 3, but also by Scribe 2 and 4, who transcribed respectively *The Saying of the Four Philosophers* and the *Battle Abbey Roll*, it might be worth analysing the content of the whole booklet as well as the role played by each scribe in order to uncover a possible project distinct from that envisaged by Scribe 1.

Booklet 3 is made of 5 quires entirely copied by Scribe 3 except for the very last one, which was in fact started by Scribe 3, who copied there the end of *Floris and Blancheflour*, and closed by Scribes 2 and 4. Thought should be given to the last item in the booklet, *The Battle Abbey Roll*. Although almost every extant item is preceded by a title, this list has no title at all,[45] thus making it impossible to determine its real nature. Nonetheless, it has come to be considered the list of the barons who allegedly landed with William the Conqueror. The only other reference to the Battle of Hastings in the manuscript is by Scribe 1 in *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle.* Although Scribe 1 generally tends to expand on the material presented in his sources,[46] he quickly dismisses the account of the Battle of Hastings in a mere couple of lines, labelling William the Conqueror's deeds

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[41] Hanna, 'Auchinleck "Scribe 6"', p. 218.
[42] Emily Runde, 'Pedagogies of Reading in Auchinleck's Booklet 3', in *The Auchinleck Manuscript: New Perspectives,* edited by Susanna Fein, York: York Medieval Press, 2018, p. 74.
[43] Shonk, 'A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 82.
[44] Hanna, 'Auchinleck "Scribe 6"', p. 217.
[45] The other untitled items are: two texts copied by Scribe 2, *Speculum Guy of Warwick* and *The Saying of the Four Philosophers*, and two copied by Scribe 1, *The Four Foes of Mankind* and *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*. The title of the *Chronicle* is possibly provided at the end of it, 'Explicit Liber Regum Angliae' (f. 317r).
[46] The other extant versions of the *Liber Regum Angliae* have roughly half the lines of the Auchinleck version. This topic will be further explored in Chapter 2.

as acts of 'vilanie' (l. 1976). Consequently, were *The Battle Abbey Roll* really conceived as the list of William the Conqueror's companions, the Norman expedition would have been given great relevance in the booklet supervised by Scribe 3, thus possibly implying that his political agenda was somehow different from that of Scribe 1. There is little evidence that the names recorded in *The Battle Abbey Roll* belong to knights who really took part in the Battle of Hastings; they seem rather to be associated with prominent late medieval knightly families.[47] The list might thus have been added at the request of the patron, possibly in order to celebrate the antiquity of their own blood.[48]

However disruptive this booklet might seem at first sight, it still appears to show a significant degree of thematic coherence with the rest of the manuscript. The opening poem of the booklet, *On the Seven Deadly Sins* seems in fact to introduce one of the key themes reverberating throughout the collection: the need to use English even in devotional texts. Since this poem was conceived to provide lay religious instruction, it encourages the worshippers not only to repeat their prayers, but also, for the sake of their souls, to understand their content by meditating upon them in their native tongue.

> And þe Pater noster and þe Crede,
> Þeroffe ȝe sscholden taken hede,
> On Englissch to segge what hit were,
> Als holi cherche ȝou wolde lere;
> For hit is to þe soules biheue,
> Ech man to knowen his bileue. (ll. 17-22)

The subsequent text, *The Paternoster,* presents the same pattern adopted in the opening text of the previous booklet, *The Speculum Guy of Warwick,* as each Latin line is followed by a direct translation and a paraphrase. *The Paternoster* not only requires the 'Lewede men þat ne beȝ no clerkes' (l. 3) to play an active role in their devotional practice, but it also engages them in scriptural exegesis. The status of Latin is neither challenged, nor debased; nonetheless, English appears to meet all the requirements of an authoritative language and be suitable for romances and chronicle, as well as for meditation upon the Word of God. Consequently, Booklet 3 could be inscribed not only in the wider

[47] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 137.
[48] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 137.

canvass of religious devotion created in the first two booklets, but also in the broader reflection on the use of English pervading the collection.

Since Scribe 3 does not seem to have been willing to detach himself significantly from the path marked by Scribe 1, it might be necessary to analyse the whole collection to find evidence of a literary project. At first sight, the manuscript seems to be roughly divided into two parts: the first – made of Booklets 1 and 2 as well as the first part of Booklet 3 – appears to be mainly characterised by moral and religious texts, whereas the second appears to be mainly characterised by secular texts, particularly romances as well as historical and political poems. The first booklet consists of 6 quires that have entirely been compiled by Scribe 1. Apart from *The King of Tars* that is usually described as a romance, the other items appear to be hagiographic, religious or moral texts.[49] These poems having been copied continuously – no quire begins with a new text – might suggest that at least the first nine items were conceived as a whole,[50] thus possibly implying that *The King of Tars* might somehow have been perceived as closer to hagiography than to romance.[51]

The King of Tars seems to resist any kind of classification, being at the same time a miracle story, a romance and a hagiographic tale. Further evidence of *The King of Tars*'s religious turn might be found in the analysis of the other extant manuscripts in which it survives. *The King of Tars* appears in the late-fourteenth-century Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. poet. a. 1, also known as *Vernon*[52] and in the late-fourteenth-century London, British Library, Additional 22283 also known as *Simeon*.[53] In both cases it co-occurs with other hagiographic or devotional works, such as *The South English*

[49] Four leaves are missing at the beginning of quire 1. The first extant text, *The Legend of Pope Gregory* is marked with number 6, thus implying that 5 items have been lost.
[50] See Appendix 2 for the list of the catchwords in the Auchinleck Manuscript.
[51] According to Ralph Hanna, one of the identifying features of a booklet production might also – but not exclusively – be the 'variation in subject matter in different parts of the manuscript'. This might reinforce the idea that *The King of Tars* as well as *Amis and Amiloun* were conceived as something other than mere romances, which conversely appear to dominate the second part of the manuscript. Hanna, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscript: Further Considerations', pp. 108-9.
[52] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. poet. a. 1, *Medieval Manuscripts in Oxford Libraries*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4817 [accessed on 31/07/2021]
[53] *Manuscripts of the West Midlands: A Catalogue of Vernacular Manuscript Books of the English West Midlands, c. 1300 - c. 1475, London, British Library, Additional 22283*, https://www.dhi.ac.uk/mwm/browse?type=ms&id=40 [accessed on 31/07/2021]

Legendary, *The Northern Homily Cycle*, or *The Prick of Conscience*. Interestingly enough, both manuscripts contain only another romance, *Robert of Cisyle*, which is considered a pious tale with a moral and didactic intent,[54] thus possibly implying that the inclusion of these romances – and consequently of the *King of Tars* in the Auchinleck – was intended more to instruct than entertain.

Booklet 2 begins with a text copied by Scribe 2, the *Speculum Guy of Warwick*. This text occupies the entire Quire 7 and the beginning of Quire 8, which is completed by Scribe 1 with the addition of *Amis and Amiloun*. The subsequent two texts, *The Life of St Magdalen* and *The Nativity and Early Life of Mary*, are all copied by Scribe 1 and might be inscribed in the category of religious tales, thus possibly emphasising the idea that Scribe 1 perceived not only *The King of Tars,* but also *Amis and Amiloun* as romances with some sort of didactic intent. Therefore, he might have included *Amis and Amiloun* in this first part since it is both a moral poem and a miracle tale, even though it retains, at the same time, the features of the marvellous and the adventurous typical of romance. It might be worth considering that a similar intention might also be detected in *The Speculum Guy of Warwick*, as this text moves the heroic figure of Guy of Warwick from the world of romance to that of devotional literature. The *Speculum* is in fact a verse homily with no connection with Guy of Warwick romances. Significantly, the Auchinleck is the only manuscript in which the *Speculum* co-occurs with the romances about Guy of Warwick. In the other fourteenth and fifteenth century manuscripts in which it is preserved, it is pre-eminently accompanied by Middle English religious material and often co-occurs with *The Prick of Conscience*.[55]

From Quire 17 onwards, Scribe 1 is again in charge of copying possibly the most important items in the collection: *Guy of Warwick* (couplets and stanzas), whereas the subsequent items, *Reinbroun* and *Beues of Hamtoun* are copied by Scribe 5. In spite of the alternation of the two scribes, the story of Guy of Warwick and that of his son, Reinbroun, might have been conceived as a whole, since they

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[54] Lillian Herlands Hornstein, 'King Robert of Sicily: Analogues and Origins', *PMLA*, 79 (1964), p. 13.
[55] A. S. G. Edwards, 'The Speculum Guy de Warwick and Lydgate's Guy of Warwick: The Non-Romance Middle English Tradition', in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, edited by Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007, pp. 83-4.

appear to have been continuously copied so as to fill the entire Booklet 4. The remaining part of the collection was entirely copied by the main scribe except for the very last item, *þe Simonie*, which occupies a self-standing fascicle – Booklet 12.

Scribe 1 might have conceived the booklets belonging to the second part as revolving around major heroic figures. Booklet 5 is in fact dominated by *Beues of Hamtoun* and *Of Arthour and of Merlin,* the very last folios being occupied by shorter texts possibly intended to be quire fillers. Booklet 6 is occupied by *Lay le Freine* and *Roland and Vernagu,* whereas Booklet 7 is entirely devoted to *Otuel a Kniȝt.* In spite of the loss of several folios from Booklet 8, it is still possible to assume that it mainly staged the deeds of *Kyng Alisaunder* and was completed by shorter poems aimed at filling the remaining folios. Booklets 9 and 10 are respectively dominated by *Sir Tristrem*, *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* as well *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild.* In both cases, the remaining folios are filled with shorter poems. Since three or even more quires appear to be missing from Booklet 11, it is impossible to determine which texts would have held centre stage in it; nonetheless, the romance *King Richard* would have certainly played a pivotal role. Although such a division into two sections – one religious and the other secular – is weakened by medieval texts resisting any kind of classification, the manuscript does seem to show a degree of organisation in two parts, at least in terms of the prominence given to some of its texts. If one considers that the first twenty-one extant texts occupy fifteen quires running over three booklets (107 leaves in all), whereas the remaining twenty-three occupy thirty-three quires in nine booklets (227 leaves in all), it is possible to infer that the first part might have been conceived as some sort of miscellany of shorter devotional texts, whereas the second might have been conceived as the main stage on which the English heroic tradition could be performed at length.

1.4 Illuminations

As far as one can infer from the remaining illuminations as well as from the stubs left by those excised, the manuscript must have been extensively illuminated and thus meant to be an expensive piece of

artwork. The illustrations' background in gold leaf would reinforce the idea of a costly production, which might have been carried out by the same atelier in charge of the decorations of the Queen Mary Psalter (London, British Library, Royal 2 B VII).[56] Although almost every item is believed to have been preceded by an illumination, only four of them and an additional heavily damaged one – that preceding *þe Wenche þat Loved þe King* (Plate 5) – still remain, as most of them have been excised over the centuries, or the entire page containing them has been removed, thus provoking irremediable loss to the content as well.[57] The gilded background characterising all the extant illuminations and the historiated large initial at the beginning of *Beues of Hamtoun* is further enriched with a diaper pattern. They are also all framed by geometrically decorated borders in blue and red hues. Interestingly, both the architectural features and the characters depicted in the illuminations referring to *Reinbroun* and to *King Richard* appear to overflow from their frames so as to blur the boundaries between the illustration and the page. Since illuminations might reveal contemporary interpretations to medieval texts, it might be worth analysing what remains of the iconographic programme of the Auchinleck Manuscript in order to gain some insight into the early reception of the relevant poems.

The first surviving illumination precedes the *King of Tars* (Plate 1) and consists of two pictorially separated images representing two scenes from the romance. In the first, the Sultan of Damascus appears to be kneeling in what seems to be a pagan temple. He is praying for his shapeless child to be transformed into a proper baby. A mysterious creature lies on the altar, possibly a pagan idol or the shapeless baby himself. However, its being closer to a sacrificial animal than to the unnatural lump of flesh described in the text gives way to the possibility that the illuminator had drawn on a conventional biblical repertoire.[58] In the second scene, the Sultan joins his wife before a Christian

[56] Shonk, 'A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript', pp. 81-2.
[57] However, not all missing leaves seem to be related to the excision of illuminations. If the item numbering is to be trusted no item is missing between *The Legend of Pope Gregory* (number 6) and the subsequent *The King of Tars* (number 7). Nonetheless, a leaf at the end of *The Legend of Pope Gregory* appears to be missing, even though no image could have been planned there.
[58] In the upper register of folio 40r of London, British Library, Royal 2 B VII ('The Queen Mary Psalter') an idol in the shape of a similar animal is depicted before a group of worshippers. 'Detailed record for Royal 2 B VII', *British Library – Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/welcome.htm [accessed on 20/06/2022]

altar upon which the uncanny lump has just been transformed into a beautiful baby by the power of Christian prayers. The choice of representing the miraculous transformation of the Sultan's child might somehow emphasise the extent to which this romance was in fact perceived as some sort of miracle tale in which prominence is given to the power of Christian prayers as well as to the strength of the Christian princess's faith.

The illumination preceding *The Paternoster* (Plate 2) is awkwardly placed between two text columns, thus implying that the pattern set by Scribe 1 might have been misinterpreted by Scribe 3, who left no space for the illustration at the beginning of the poem. The image represents Christ in throne offering the *Paternoster* to humankind. The empty scroll might in fact stand for the prayer paraphrased in the relevant text. The idea that the illumination was unplanned and added as an emendation might be further reinforced by the unskilful reproduction of the diaper pattern, which appears to be rendered as a mere series of disordered punch-marks scattered all over the gilded background.

The illumination preceding *Reinbroun* (Plate 3) possibly represents the moment in which Guy of Warwick's son defeats and cuts the nose of the 'kniȝtes of fayri' (l. 1018), who keeps 'Þre hondred kniȝtes & mo' (l. 1037) as prisoners. On the grounds of the shape of the hilts and cross-guards, it is possible to infer that both Reinbroun's and Beues of Hamtoun's swords are consistent with the early fourteenth-century fashion.[59]

The historiated large 'L' opening *Beues of Hamtoun* (Plate 4) represents the eponymous hero standing in full armour with sword and spear. A foliate bar border also descends from the historiated initial along the left-hand margin of the page.[60] At the beginning of the fourteenth century leg harnesses and vambraces were already part of the knight's equipment; consequently, the mail armour worn by Reinbroun, Beues of Hamtoun and King Richard I might somehow have appeared outdated.[61]

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[59] R. Ewart Oakeshott, *The Archeology of Weapons*, New York: Dover, 2018, p. 210.

[60] A similar pattern, in a much-reduced form, can also be detected around the large rubricated initial of *The Short Anonymous English Metrical Chronical* on folio 304r as well as in the negative of the historiated initial barely visible on folio 114r.

[61] Oakeshott, *The Archeology of Weapons*, p. 285.

The helms represented would reinforce the idea that various kinds of armours were contemporarily depicted. In the 1330s, the flat-topped ‘saucepan’ helmet worn by the fairy knight in *Reinbroun* might have been considered almost a relic as compared to the kettle-hats worn by King Richard I and possibly by Reinbroun himself. However, the artist was not completely unaware of the latest innovations in terms of warfare, as he depicts Beues of Hamtoun wearing the newly developed bascinet.[62] The illustrators might thus have taken inspiration from existing models at least as much as from reality. The analysis of analogues shows in fact that, though outdated, the knightly equipment depicted in the Auchinleck was still widely represented. For instance, in the *Queen Mary Psalter* (London, British Library, MS Royal 2 B VII, fols. 36r; 39r; 41r; 56r),[63] in the roughly contemporary *Luttrell Psalter* (London, British Library, Add. MS 42130, fols. 39v; 51r; 82r; 106r; 202v),[64] as well as the in the early fourteenth-century manuscript containing a translation of the *Secretum Secretorum* commissioned for the coronation of Edward III (London, British Library, Add. 47680, fols. 14v; 34r)[65] all knights represented seem to share the same mixed iconographical repertoire.

The illumination referring to *King Richard* (Plate 6) depicts his spectacular arrival in the city of Acre. The king is standing at the bow of his ship, holding the axe whereby he is about to cut the chains protecting the city gate. The helpless citizens look in full terror from the castle’s walls. The castle portcullises are wide open in order to emphasise that King Richard’s fury cannot be restrained. The giant figure of the king is disproportionate as compared to his soldiers’, as to draw the audience’s attention to his superhuman nature. Significantly, in the illumination referring to *Reinbroun*, Guy’s son is dressed in blue, a colour that is usually associated with kingship,[66] whereas the fairy knight is dressed in crimson. That same crimson is disturbingly worn by King Richard I, possibly in order to

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[62] Oakeshott, *The Archeology of Weapons*, p. 287.
[63] ‘Detailed record for Royal 2 B VII’, *British Library – Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/welcome.htm [accessed on 20/06/2022]
[64] ‘Detailed record for Add MS 42130’, *British Library – Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=add_ms_42130 [accessed on 20/06/2022]
[65] ‘Detailed record for Add MS 47680’, *British Library – Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8818&CollID=27&NStart=47680 [accessed on 20/06/2022]
[66] King Arthur is often represented dressed in blue, as a mark of kingship. Michel Pastoureau, *Blu. Storia di un Colore (Bleu. Histoire d’une couleur),* translated by Fabrizio Ascari, Milan: Salani, 2008, p. 68.

emphasise his prodigious strength. Although any generalisation is undermined by the paucity of surviving illuminations, the choice of having both the Plantagenet King and the fairy knight dressed in the same colour might not have been accidental, but rather aimed at recreating the same romantic atmosphere sketched in the poem. The author of *King Richard* in fact depicts the Christian King's arrival as true 'meruayl'.

> For þe coming of king Richard
> To þe see þai vrn aforward
> To see Richardes galaye seyl
> His minstrels & his riche parayl;
> For þai seye neuer swiche coming
> To Acres of no Cristen king.
> King Richard after þis meruayl
> Went quic o lond saunfeyl. (ll. 765-72)

Interestingly, the colour choice might provide further interpretative keys in the first extant illumination as well: the pagan Sultan of Damascus not only wears a crown that could well encircle the head of any Western king, but is also conveniently dressed in blue, like the Christian Arthur in Pastoureau's study, possibly prefiguring his final conversion.

An analogue representation can be detected in the contemporary manuscript London, British Library, Royal MS 19 D I, folio 187v (Plate 7) containing – amongst other texts – Jean de Vignay's French translation of *Directorium ad Faciendum Passagium Transmarinum,* an anonymous Latin treatise on crusading presented to King Philip VI of France in the 1330s (fols. 165v-192v).[67] This text is one of the recovery treatises offered to the King of France in order to assess possible ways to recover the Holy Land. In the selected illumination, the King of France and his Crusader army are approaching a Saracen fortress.

The Auchinleck illuminations thus seem to function as a guide to the interpretation of the texts, by drawing the readers' attention to their major themes. On a narrative level, they appear not only to reproduce faithfully what is accounted for in the texts, but also to maintain the blurred boundaries between literary genres, as well as the ambiguity imbuing the texts.

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[67] 'Detailed record for Royal MS 19 D I', *British Library – Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/welcome.htm [accessed on 20/06/2022]

1.5 Item Numbers and Page Lay-out

Each text is believed to have been preceded by an item number at the top of the page, almost certainly added by Scribe 1. Although the trimming of the pages has provoked the loss of many item numbers, many others are still visible. Since the first extant item, *The Legend of Pope Gregory*, is marked with number 6, it is possible to infer that five additional texts have been lost. Numbers 6 to 16 are regular, whereas item number 17 is used twice (on both items 12 and 13).[68] Numbers 18 to 20 seem to have been skipped by Scribe 1, as *The Nativity and Early Life of Mary* is marked with number 21 instead of 18. Numbers 21 to 25 are regular, whereas 26 is used twice (on both items 19 and 20). Numbers 27 to 37 are again regular,[69] whereas the following six items (38 to 43) are now lost as *Kyng Alisaunder* is marked with number 44, thus implying that one or more quires must be missing. *The Thrush and the Nightingale* is correctly marked with number 45, whereas the loss of 5 leaves at the centre of quire 41 provoked the loss of three additional texts (items 46 to 48). The three subsequent extant items are consistently marked with numbers 49, 50, and 51, whereas item number 52 is used twice (on both items 38 and 39). The following four texts are regularly marked with numbers 53 to 56, whereas the last item, *þe Simonie*, appears to be marked with a barely visible number that might range from 60 to 69.[70] In the facsimile edition, Cunningham advanced the hypothesis that the different ink used for the item numbers might reveal their addition at a later stage. Nonetheless, given the inaccuracies in the number sequence, it is doubtful whether they might have been added when the manuscript was finally bound.[71]

The disruption caused by the absence of numbers 18, 19, 20 might be explained by supposing that Scribe 1 had so carefully planned the order of the texts, that he added the item numbers before having

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[68] For a detailed account of the original item numbers see the tables on pp. 22-8.
[69] *Reinbroun* – marked with number 29 – presents one missing leaf at the end of the text. On the grounds of the Anglo-Norman original, there should be additional 41 lines, which roughly correspond to one column in the Auchinleck layout. This might give way at least to three possibilities: either the scribe left one column and the back of the leaf completely empty (like in folio 107), or there might have been a now-lost filler. In this case, since the subsequent text, *Beues of Hamtoun* is marked with number 30, there would be an error in the number sequence, as in the case of number 52, which is used for both items 38 and 39. The third possibility is that the Auchinleck redactor might have designed a new and substantially longer ending for this romance.
[70] Pearsall, Cunningham, p. xiv.
[71] Pearsall, Cunningham, p. xiv.

the booklets / quires assembled. This would somehow reinforce the idea that Scribe 1 acted as the supervisor of the whole collection. However, the catchword at the end of Booklet 2 would run against the possibility that any additional three-text booklet was planned to be inserted between Booklets 2 and 3. However inaccurate the item numbering might be, it can entirely reveal the extent of what has been lost. At least thirteen items appear to be missing and thus any assumption based on what might have been included or excluded from this comprehensive collection is weakened by the impossibility to determine the nature of the content lost. The item titles as well seem to have been an afterthought. The only title which was certainly planned from the start is that preceding the *Paternoster*, since Scribe 3 placed it conveniently at the beginning of the text. In any other case, the title has been added either in the unruled space at the top of the column in which the text begins (items 7, 13, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 35, 41, 43, 44) or at the end of the previous text, beside closing formulas, such as ‘explicit’ or ‘amen’ (items 4, 5).

Each scribe appears to have used a different type of ruling; however, if one quire was shared between two scribes, the second tended to conform to the style adopted by the first. The page layout is pre-eminently in two columns, as 41 items out of 44 follow this pattern, whereas the remaining three items either run in one column – *The Legend of Pope Gregory* and *þe Simonie,* or in four – *The Battle Abbey Roll*.[72]

1.6 Ownership and Patronage

In 1925, the Faculty of Advocates donated the Auchinleck Manuscript to the National Library of Scotland alongside other non-legal books and manuscripts. It has henceforth been stored there, at first with the pressmark W.4.I, then with the number Adv. MS 19.2.1.[73] Its previous history is almost entirely surrounded by mystery. What is known for certain is that in 1744, a member of the Faculty of Advocates, Sir Alexander Boswell Lord Auchinleck, presented it to the library of the faculty. How

[72] Shonk, ‘A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript’, p. 77.
[73] Around 1840 all manuscripts were re-catalogued according to numerical references. Pearsall, Cunningham, p. vii.

he came into possession of the manuscript is still uncertain, although he is believed to have rescued it from a scholar of the University of Aberdeen, who was about to destroy it in order to make notebook covers.[74] According to Alison Wiggins, the presence of a number of fragments at the University of St Andrews would demonstrate not only that the manuscript was already in Scotland before Sir Boswell's acquisition, but also that in the early eighteenth century the whole manuscript belonged to a scholar of that same university.[75] Since Boswell's signature appears on a flyleaf beside the year 1740, it is possible to infer that, by that date, the manuscript must already have been his. What happened before is a mere matter of conjecture, since no evidence of any previous owner has ever been found, apart from a set of signatures and comments disseminated throughout the manuscript.

Some of these signatures apparently date back to the fourteenth or the fifteenth century. On folio 183r, one can read *William Barnes*, *Richard* and possibly *William Drow* (?), *Anthony* and *John Elcocke* (with a minor spelling difference Elcocke / Ellcocke), whereas on folio 107r, one can read the name of eight members of the *Browne* family dating back to the fourteenth or possibly fifteenth century (*Mr Thomas* and *Mrs Isabell, Katherin, Eistre, Elizabeth, William, Walter, Thomas, Agnes*).[76] Interestingly, the names of the members of the Browne family are placed at the end of the list of the barons who followed William the Conqueror. According to Philippa Hardman, the addition of these names at the end of this list would not be accidental, but rather carefully planned, as the Anglo-

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[74] Arthur Johnston, *Enchanted Ground: The Study of Medieval Romance in the Eighteenth Century*, London: Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 179.

[75] 'The manuscript was certainly in Boswell's possession by 1740, as his signature appears on a paper flyleaf with this date. But it seems likely that it came to Scotland before this date and that it was acquired by Boswell here rather than brought to Scotland by him. This is suggested by the location of a number of fragments from Auchinleck that were used as notebook covers by an unidentified St Andrews professor. It may be that this connection with the University of St Andrews implies that Auchinleck was owned by scholar there in the early eighteenth century.' *The Auchinleck Manuscript*, edited by David Burnley and Alison Wiggins. https://auchinleck.nls.uk/editorial/history.html [accessed on 15/03/2021] The great antiquarian David Laing reported that a learned and reverend friend had given him the two Edinburgh bifolia. Laing's friend might be identified with John Lee, professor of Church History at St Mary's College, St Andrews (1812-21) and principal at both the University of St Andrews (1836-7) and Edinburgh (1840-59). The St Andrews fragment was conversely discovered by George H. Bushnell in the cover of a notebook owned by Thomas Tullideph, the mid-eighteenth-century principal of the University of St Andrews. The presence of these and others detached fragments (see p. 21) used as binding for other books gives way to the possibility that the manuscript was in fact 'owned by a Scottish binder or binding shop', possibly in Edinburgh. Significantly, Tullideph had been a student at the University of Edinburgh, whereas his brother, David, worked there as an apprentice to the bookseller James McQueen. Connolly, Edwards, 'Evidence for the History of the Auchinleck Manuscript', pp. 297-8; 300.

[76] Pearsall, Cunningham, p. xv-xvi.

Norman form of the name Browne, *Brun*, appears amongst the names of the Norman barons. Over the fifteenth century other members of the Browne family left their names on a number of other pages.[77] Consequently, this manuscript might have been passed down through subsequent generations of the same family as a living proof of the antiquity of their blood, which could be traced back to the early years of the Norman conquest.[78]

Nonetheless, it might be worth considering that at least three names from the medieval period might correspond to the Browne family based in Stamford. One William Browne from Stamford as well as his two daughters, Agnes and Elizabeth,[79] belonged to a family of great prominence and antiquity, whose roots can be traced back to the mid-fourteenth century.[80] Considering that William Browne obtained a coat of arms only after his death, the addition of the names of his closest relatives at the end of the list mentioning the names of the most prominent knightly families might have been aimed at providing them with a pedigree of ancient nobility. Since Browne was a very common name,[81] it might be impossible to determine whether the members of the Browne family who left their names on the manuscript are in fact those belonging to the prominent family of merchants based in Stamford. However, a merchant family's possibly possessing such a manuscript might lead to inferring that they were both sufficiently wealthy to afford it and interested in owning a collection of this kind.

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[77] According to Philippa Hardman, the signatures previously attributed to Richard Drow and William Dro<…> on folio 183r would be in fact those of Richard and William Browne. Philippa Hardman, 'Domestic Learning and Teaching: Investigating Evidence for the Role of "Household Miscellanies" in Late-Medieval England', in *Women and Writing, C.1340-c.1650: The Domestication of Print Culture,* edited by Anne Lawrence-Mathers and Phillipa Hardman, York: York Medieval Press, 2010, p. 20.

[78] Hardman, 'Domestic Learning and Teaching', pp. 19-20.

[79] *ODNB,* Browne, William (d. 1489), merchant and benefactor https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-94940?rskey=OiTwMv&result=5 [accessed on 20/06/2021]; Justin Simpson, 'The Browne Family of Stamford, Co. Lincoln, and Tolethorpe Rutland', *Notes and Queries*, 111 (1888), pp. 102-3.

[80] *The Lilford Estate,* http://www.lilfordhall.com/ElmesFamily/William-Browne.asp [accessed on 20/06/2021] and John Drakard, *The History of Stamford, in the County of Lincoln: Comprising Its Ancient, Progressive, and Modern State: With an Account of St. Martin's, Stamford Baron, and Great and Little Wothorpe, Northamptonshire*, Stamford: John Drakard, 1822, pp. 277-8.

[81] Nicole Clifton, '*The Seven Sages of Rome* Children's Literature and the Auchinleck Manuscript', in *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance the Results of a Paradigm Shift in the History of Mentality,* Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005, p. 189.

One Walter Brown also left his name on the St Andrews fragment S R.4 from quire 48, whereas the name of *William Gisslort* (?), possibly dating back to the sixteenth century, appears on folio 107v. From the seventeenth and eighteenth century, one can read the names of one *John* (fol. 300r), *Christian Gunter* (fol. 205r), and *John Harreis* (fol. 247r). Nicole Clifton has identified *Christian Gunter* with a seventeenth-century woman related to the environment of the London Inns of Court. Her uncle Thomas Gunter as well as her husband Thomas Clarke appear in fact to have belonged to Gray's Inn.[82] This might imply that the manuscript had already been in the context of inns and courts before being rescued by Sir Alexander Boswell. However, the relationship of all these names with the manuscript still remains opaque.

Apart from a number of signatures, there are several other traces left by previous owners and readers. According to Carl James Grindley's classification, the Auchinleck's marginalia may fall into several different categories. The aforementioned names would belong to Type I-OM, 'ownership marks', whereas the many doodles and pen tests dispersed throughout the manuscript would respectively belong to Type I-DO, 'doodles' and Type I-PT, 'pen trials'.[83] The signatures themselves can be considered some sort of pen-trials aimed not only at testing the available materials, such as homemade ink, but also at self-training in writing. This practice might be related either to barely literate owners who were possibly struggling to master their own signatures, or to extremely refined and cultivated readers who wanted to practice their signature in order to demonstrate the full extent of their achievements.[84]

The critical comments left on the margins of *Floris and Blancheflour* might be classified as Type II-AT, 'additional text', as on the verso of its second extant folio, a sixteenth or seventeenth-century

[82] Nicole Clifton, 'Early Modern Readers of the Romance of "Of Arthour and of Merlin"', *Scriptorium Press*, 24 (2014), pp. 72; 87-8.
[83] Carl James Grindley, 'Reading Piers Plowman C-Text Annotations: Notes toward the Classification of Printed and Written Marginalia in Texts from the British Isles 1300-1641', in *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe, and Gower*, edited by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo, Victoria: University of Victoria, 2001, p. 78.
[84] Jason Scott-Warren, 'Reading Graffiti in the Early Modern Book', *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73 (2010), p. 368.

reader added a few lines of comment unrelated to the text.[85] At the top of the page, this reader seems in fact to praise the heroic stature of the valiant Guy of Warwick, whereas, at the bottom, he comments on the author's impossibility of providing an eye-witness account of the deeds of many valorous knights. In his eyes, the mind behind this collection was certainly not that of a warrior, but rather that of a mere writer, reporting or even inventing stories related to the English heroic tradition. The sixteenth and seventeenth-century marginalia added to *Of Arthour and of Merlin* and *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* mainly appear to belong to Grindley's Type III, 'directly associated with the text' and fall into the subcategories: Type III-NRA-DP, 'Narrative Reading Aids, sub-type Dramatis Personae' and Type III-NRA-SM, 'Narrative Reading Aids, sub-type Summation'. The absence of any evaluative comment is consistent with the general early modern practice of annotating texts in order to provide a summary or an in-depth analysis of them, rather than personal reflections.[86] The following table summarises the distribution of the Auchinleck marginalia.

Folio	**Poem**	**Marginalia**
7r	The King of Tars	A signature, possibly 'Tho*mas*'
11r	The King of Tars	'Thomas, TB'
32r	þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi and þe Soule	'A dialogue between the soul and the body'
32v		'Thomas Bro'
65v	The Life of St Mary Magdalene	'Th', pen tests
89v-99r	The Seven Sages of Rome	A series of number, possibly pencil marks by an editor,
101v	Floris and Blancheflour (16th or 17th century)[87]	'Gij of Warwick was a valurous knight | He laieth in his armour all a wintre night' 'Hye that wrought this booke had litle to doe | I would as he had this againe so we had a newe | he speakes of Gij of Warwick and manie other good knights | that he himself did neu[er] durst to see them fight | he was an idle fellow as this doth appe[ar] | <…>'
103r	Floris and Blancheflour	Barely legible comments or signatures, possibly 'ouli knigh*t* Booke'
105r-107r	The Battle Abbey Roll (14th – 15th century)	'x' pencilled cross on the left of these names: Audele (+ comments in a later hand – 'Thouchat' <*William*>); Touchet; Lovel; Delet; Grynel

[85] Grindley, 'Reading Piers Plowman C-Text Annotations', pp. 79-80.

[86] Grindley, 'Reading Piers Plowman C-Text Annotations', pp. 73-91; Jason Scott-Warren, 'Cut-and-Paste Bookmaking: The Private/Public Agency of Robert Nicolson', in *Early Modern English Marginalia*, edited by Katherine Acheson, New York: Routledge, 2019, p. 39.

[87] All information about the dating of the handwriting has been taken from Pearsall, Cunningham, p. xvi.

		‘Mr Thomas, Mrs Isabell Browne and Katherin, Eistre, Elizabeth, William, Walter, Thomas and Agnes Browne’; ‘for the *men without* m<…> of <…>’; ‘Thomas’; ‘Th’; ‘T<….>’
107v	Blank page (16th century)	‘William Gisslort’; ‘wee praise the Ø’; ‘Domine dom<*ine*>’; ‘domynue diana’; ‘domy’; ‘domine nostre’; ‘Jacobi Domine’; ‘Domine Nostre Jacobi’; ‘dei gra<*tia*>’; some attempts to imitate scribal abbreviations.
112r	Guy of Warwick (c.)	Barely legible signatures, possibly ‘gme myca<*l*>’
113r	Guy of Warwick (c.)	Possibly ‘gme’; ‘for<*man*>’; ‘Thomas’
114r	Guy of Warwick (c.)	Illegible signature
121v	Guy of Warwick (c.)	‘Ȝ Gij of Warwick was a valurous knight’
128r	Guy of Warwick (c.)	Doodle and an imitation of the item number ‘XXVIII’
132v	Guy of Warwick (c.)	Illegible signature at the top of the page
143r	Guy of Warwick (c.)	‘John’; ‘johes joh<…>’
161v	Guy of Warwick (s.)	‘Optima forma fides’
162r	Guy of Warwick (s.)	‘thost that <…>’
165r	Guy of Warwick (s.)	Illegible comments/signatures
169r	Reinbroun	‘No*ta*’ [written beside the half-stanza from line 337-42]
169v	Reinbroun	‘xxxiiij’ [written beside the 34th stanza outlined from the beginning of the poem]
176r	Sir Beues of Hamtoun	‘John’; ‘John Barne’; ‘forman’; several doodles
177r	Sir Beues of Hamtoun	Pen tests
183r	Sir Beues of Hamtoun (14th – 15th century)	‘that thy’; ‘gme William Barnes’; ‘Richard Drow (?)’; ‘William Dro<...>’; ‘Anthony Elcocke’; ‘John Ellcocke’; ‘gme iuxta form<*am*> statuti in eo cas<*u*>’[88]
184r	Sir Beues of Hamtoun	Possibly ‘Anthony’
191r	Sir Beues of Hamtoun	Barely legible signatures, possibly ‘th’
201v	Of Arthour & of Merlin[89] (16th – 17th century)	‘<*Const*>ance had <const>ance <*and*> ambros and <*uter*> Pendragoun’; ‘<*The eld*>est brother <*was a mon*>*n*k that after <*became*> *a* kyng Moyne’; ‘Vortiger senescall’; ‘Angys of denmark *contra* nos Engist’
202v	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘<*Constan*>ceus capite <……>*an*tur *contra* dice Moyne’; ‘<*juventut*>e etatem’; ‘Vortiger fit Rex <…...> sen*eschall* per prodi*c* xij co<*nspirati*>’
203r	Of Arthour & of Merlin	barely legible signature, possibly ‘William Browne (?)’; ‘suspens*us* per co<*rdam*>’
203v	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘Vortiger et Angus participes’
204r	Of Arthour & of Merlin	Two signatures ‘William Browne’ and ‘Andrew Warde’; some doodles; ‘Castrum Vortigeri <*non*> potuit erigi’
204v	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘<*observati*>o Astronomorum’; ‘<…*su*>orum consilium <……>*o*nero’; ‘Incubus’
205r	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘Blasius’; ‘Incub<*us*> inuitat Leon*a*<*m*> ad virgines in<*trare*>’; ‘adulterium mor<*e*> dierum’; a signature ‘Christian Gunter’ (18th century)
205v	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘3a soror apud blasium’; ‘<….>*c*ac<.>o <m>o<n>tens *non* *Su*<….>*a*t’
206r	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘3a soror in tor<*tionem*> citata’; manicula pointing at line 843

[88] I would like to thank my colleague Laura de Luisa for her invaluable help in deciphering this marginal note.

[89] The marginalia referred to *Of Arthour and of Merlin* are mainly taken from the edition by Macrae-Gibson. *Of Arthour and of Merlin,* vol 2, edited by O. D. Macrae-Gibson, EETS OS 279, London: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 266-7.

206v	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘3a soror *v*irg*in*<*al*>*is* incarcerat<*a*> quousque <…..>’
207r	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘Merlyny responsus pro matrem coram judicem et *num* b<…>os er*a*t // Mer<*lyny*> accusat m<*atrem*> iudicis’
208r	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘Speculatores Vortigeri’; ‘Merlyne’
209r	Of Arthour & of Merlin	Illegible signatures
209v	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘<*M*>erlyn Vortigero’; ‘<*d*>rachones’
210r	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘Castrum Erectum’
210v	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘Drachones quid <*s*>ignificarint’
211r	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘Uther Pendragon a<*d*> Wyntoniam’; ‘Vexillum’ ; ‘Leo Uther Pendragonis’; ‘Vortiger adminiculum ha*bet* ab Angis’
211v	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘Vexillum’; ‘<*proe*>lium inter <*Ut*>erp. et Vortiger’
212r	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘Uter Vortigerum prosequitur ac igne con*sumi*tur’; ‘Merlynus al<*loquitur ad*> speculatores V<*ortigeri*> uterp. misit qaesitum Merlynum’; ‘Merlyni’
212v	Of Arthour & of Merlin	‘<*Me*>rlynus alloquitur <*ad*> Uterp’
222v	Of Arthour & of Merlin	Pen test
247r	Of Arthour & of Merlin (18th century)	‘John Harreis’
257r	A Peniworþ of Witt	Barely legible signature/comment
260r	How Our Lady's Sauter was First Found	Illegible signature/comment or possibly a pen test
264r	Roland and Vernagu	Pen test
L.f.1v	Kyng Alisaunder	Some calculations and pen tests
L.f.2r	Kyng Alisaunder	Some calculations
289r	Sir Tristrem	‘To my very good friend Thomas’; ‘Thomas’
292r	Sir Tristrem	Some illegible signatures and possibly pen tests or doodles
300r	Sir Orfeo	‘This <*J*> John reade’; ‘John’ (17th century)
304r	The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle (16th – 17th century)	‘Alias gra*me*’ (written beside the word garme as some sort of correction to the text)
305v	The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle	‘<*Al*>byne here <*ar*>ryueth with her sisters’; ‘Incubi’; ‘hanc coluere terram 800 annis’; the word ‘Albion’ is stressed at line 315
306r	The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle	‘Albyon’; ‘perit Comagog *s*<…> cornio’
306v	The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle	‘<*Corn*>ubia’; ‘<*Tro*>y nouva[n]t’; ‘<*Loker*>yne Ca*m*ber <*Alb*>anactus’; ‘<*a*>nnis regnavit <*Brut*>us’; ‘<*sep*>ultus vuestmon*ster* quod tunc dierum nostrum’; ‘Lokerine LVII’; ‘Eboras’; ‘Dauidis tempore’; ‘LXII annis regnat’; ‘Lud’; ‘Cantuaria erecta’
307r	The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle	‘Lud LXXXVI annis’; ‘Bladud’; ‘balnea apud Bathonum’; ‘Bladud regnat <*CL annis*>’; ‘Fortiger <…> re<…>’; ‘no<*ta*> pro Hounde<*sdiche*>’; ‘Danoldus’
307v	The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle	‘Belyn et Brenne Denwoldi’; ‘<…>inetas fructas’; ‘<…>rnam novam’; ‘<Dene>wold apud <*Sche*>ftsbury C annis’; ‘<*Bel*>yn’; ‘Engiste’; ‘Urbes novas ab Engiste erectas’ [the sentence is preceded by a reference to ll. 666-74]; manicula on line 687 referring to ‘ordinances’; ‘Leges

		statuto hundred stadia per Engistum' [the sentence is preceded by a reference to ll. 688-702]
308r	The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle	'No<*ta*>'; 'Stonage'; 'de Londino'; 'vid*erunt* quod Do*r*<…>'
308v	The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle	'<*Vas*>conia et Nor<mandie> <…>ma per Engi<stum>'
315r	The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle	'50 moder chirche'
E.f.3v	King Richard	Doodles and pen tests
S.R.4f.2	King Richard	'Walter Brown'; pen tests
334v	Þe Simonie	'finis'

The dissemination of comments and signatures across the centuries demonstrates that the interest in this manuscript went well beyond the boundaries of time. The sixteenth or seventeenth-century Latin and English glosses added to *Of Arthour and of Merlin* and *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* might in fact prove that before becoming an item of exclusive antiquarian interest, this manuscript was perceived as a source of historically reliable knowledge.[90] Interestingly, the early modern readers who left their traces on the pages of the Auchinleck Manuscript appear to have been solely interested in the sections referring to England's legendary foundation and most ancient kings, as their annotations only appear in the first part of both *Of Arthour and of Merlin* and *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*.[91] One might wonder how these parts that are certainly the most legendary could be of any interest to early modern readers. In this respect, it might be worth emphasising that Merlin was strongly associated with political prophecy, a genre that was extremely popular not only in the later Middle Ages, but also in the Renaissance.[92] Therefore, any account of his mysterious birth, extraordinary wisdom, and prophetic powers might have been used to give authority to the political prophecies ascribed to him. However, early modern readers' attention was not exclusively caught by Merlin's supernatural powers, but also by his sense of justice, as the

[90] Clifton, 'Early Modern Readers of the Romance of "Of Arthour and of Merlin"', p. 72.
[91] At least five different hands appear to have added their comments on *Of Arthour and of Merlin* between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Clifton, 'Early Modern Readers of the Romance of "Of Arthour and of Merlin"', p. 72.
[92] Clifton, 'Early Modern Readers of the Romance of "Of Arthour and of Merlin"', p. 77.

sections devoted to the defence of his mother's rights, as well as those reporting his advice to the king are crowded with notes.

As for *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* early modern readers' interest seems to have predominantly lain in the sections that have significantly been expanded in the Auchinleck version: Albina's treason and consequent exile, as well as King Hengist's mythical realm. The story of Albina and her sisters not only enjoyed great popularity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,[93] but was still mentioned in the sixteenth century, even though at that point its authenticity had increasingly been questioned. For instance, in his *Chronicle of England, Scotland, and Ireland,* Raphael Holinshed leaves it to his audience to decide whether this story could be considered historically plausible or not.[94]

> And thus much for the ladies, whose strange aduenture of their arriuall here, as it may séeme to manie & (with good cause) incredible, so without further auouching it for truth, I leave it to the consideration of the reader, to thinke thereof as reason shall moue him; sith I sée not how either in this, or in other things of such antiquitie, we cannot haue sufficient warrant otherwise than by likelie coniectures.[95]

Although these early modern readers generally appear to focus on the names of ancient kings, as well as on the length of their reigns, when it comes to King Hengist, they also focus their attention on the improvements the legendary king brought to his realm: the names of newly founded cities and the enforcement of new laws are in fact duly remarked upon. It might be worth considering that the story of Hengist was completely reworked and expanded in the Auchinleck version possibly in order to convey a precise idea of kingship. In the *Chronicle,* Hengist's portrait is in fact that of a king caring for his subjects and ruling with his parliament.[96] Therefore, given the number of notes devoted to King Hengist's reign, the debate around the features of the ideal king must have been perceived as still extremely relevant to early modern readers.

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[93] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* edited by Ewald Zettl, EETS OS 196, London: Oxford University Press, 1935, p. xlvii. This theme will be explored in Chapter 2.

[94] Although during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries its historicity was increasingly questioned, the Albina story appears to have still functioned as an example of female perversity in moral tales. Phil Robinson-Self, *Early Modern Britain's Relationship to its Past: The Historiographical Fortunes of the Legends of Brute, Albina and Scota*, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2018, e Book Chapter 2, 'Albina and Her Sisters: Female Foundations'.

[95] Raphael Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicle of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, London: Richard Taylor, 1807, p. 436.

[96] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 109.

The many notes added to *Of Arthour and of Merlin* seem to suggest that, in the seventeenth century, this text was still perceived as a means to reflect on political preoccupations extending well beyond the specific decade in which the Auchinleck was created. For instance, the debate over succession rights reverberates throughout the story of the treacherous steward Vortigern, who usurps the throne of the rightful king. At the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was created, Vortigern's story was certainly seen as extremely relevant, as Edward III had just captured and executed his mother's lover, Roger Mortimer, who had taken advantage of his key position at court in order to amass titles and property. However, the following centuries were equally characterised by political turmoil and extensive debate over succession and legitimacy: Henry IV usurped Richard II's throne on the ground of his inability to rule, whereas Henry VI's weak rule was tragically ended in bloodshed by the fratricide Wars of the Roses. The succession debate was revived after the death of Henry VIII's only male heir, Edward VI, as well as at the end of the realm of the old and childless Queen Elizabeth I.[97] *Of Arthour and of Merlin* also offered the opportunity to reflect upon the threat represented by foreign queens and full-scale invasions, as England appears to have been constantly upheaved by external enemies and internal unrest. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, a foreign invasion must have been perceived as increasingly imminent, given that, on the verge of the Hundred Years' War, the relations with France had become irremediably strained. Although in the late sixteenth century the external threat was no longer represented by France, Queen Elizabeth I had to face another potential invader, the formidable Spanish Armada.[98]

Another hint of the reception of this manuscript across the centuries can be detected in what is believed to be the sole *fabliau* of this collection, *þe Wenche þat Loved þe King*. Since the title is barely readable and was possibly scratched alongside text and illumination, it is almost impossible to determine the true nature of this poem.[99] However, as far as one can infer from what remains, the illumination appears to represent two people in bed, thus essentially being entirely consistent with

[97] Clifton, 'Early Modern Readers of the Romance of "Of Arthour and of Merlin"', p. 74.
[98] Clifton, 'Early Modern Readers of the Romance of "Of Arthour and of Merlin"', pp. 73-4.
[99] Melissa Furrow, '"þe Wenche", the Fabliau, and the Auchinleck Manuscript', *Notes and Queries,* 239 (1994), p. 441.

analogous illuminations preceding instances of this literary genre. However, since the scribe is unlikely to have come back to the text in order to obliterate it, one later reader must have found it unsuitable for such a collection and decided to destroy it.[100] This might reinforce the idea that this manuscript was not perceived as some sort of miscellanea of disparate texts, but rather as a collection with a specific purpose, possibly related to the development of the idea of Englishness. Significantly, this is not the sole emendation contained in this manuscript. Only a few pages later, the first column of *How Our Lady's Sauter was First Found* appears to have been written on a patch of parchment glued over a pre-existing text. It might be impossible to determine the reasons that led the scribe to cover the previous text instead of merely scratching it; however, this manuscript seems to have undergone a certain degree of replanning before reaching the current form.

Since neither the names of the later readers, nor the marginalia appear entirely decisive in determining the patron's identity, many scholars have turned to textual evidence in order to gain some insight into the intended audience. For instance, the names of the Norman barons listed in the *Battle Abbey Roll* have been carefully scrutinised over the past few decades. According to Felicity Riddy, the Auchinleck's patron might have been a self-made woman, such as Katherine de la Poole, whose family name is listed amongst William the Conqueror's companions.[101] Turville-Petre also looks at this list in order to find evidence of the patron's identity. Since the Crusades are given great prominence in the manuscript, the patron might have been a member of a family of considerable standing with a long crusading tradition, such as the Beauchamps and the Percies. Turville-Petre also grounds his hypothesis in the Beauchamp family's claiming Guy of Warwick amongst their ancestors.[102] At the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was created, Thomas Beauchamp, eleventh Earl of Warwick, was one of Edward III's most praised commanders and was to gain a martial reputation during the Hundred Years' War. Significantly, the name of his eldest son was Guy, whereas the name

[100] Furrow, '"þe Wenche"', p. 442.
[101] Felicity Riddy, 'The Auchinleck Manuscript: A Woman's Book?', unpublished paper given at the 'Romance in Medieval England' conference, Bristol, 1992. *The Auchinleck Manuscript*, edited by David Burnley and Alison Wiggins https://auchinleck.nls.uk/editorial/history.html [accessed on 04/08/2021]
[102] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 136.

of his third son was Reinbroun – his second son was named after his father and was to become the twelfth Earl of Warwick. Guy's and Reinbroun's date of birth was not recorded. However, since Thomas's second son and heir was born sometime between 1337 and 1339, whereas his fourth son, William Beauchamp, future Baron Bergavenny, was born around 1343, Reinbroun must have been born in the late 1330s or early 1340s. It might be impossible to determine whether the Auchinleck Manuscript was conceived to reflect the Beauchamps's renewed interest in their legendary ancestry; however, this manuscript's giving such great prominence to the story of Guy of Warwick might somehow be related to the prestige and popularity this character was enjoying at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[103]

Readers and scholars who came across this manuscript in the subsequent centuries might also have tried to discover the patron's identity amongst the names of the *Battle Abbey Roll*. This list might in fact have captured early modern readers' attention, as a few names appear to have been singled out. Whoever read this list some centuries afterwards seems to have had considerable knowledge of the English peerage, since next to the name 'Audele', they marked the name 'Touchat'. At the death of Nicholas de Audley, third Lord of Audley, in 1391, the ancient branch of the Audley family was extinguished and was only revived by his sister's descendants through the marriage of Joan de Audley with John Tuchet.[104] The two families were henceforth united into one.

1.7 Literary Relevance and Major Threads

Turville-Petre suggests a loose division of the contents of the Auchinleck Manuscript into three major categories, according to the literary genres to which each item belongs. The first is mainly

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[103] Beauchamp, Thomas, eleventh earl of Warwick (1313/14–1369), *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-53085?rskey=IGEW3G&result=4 [accessed on 05/10/2021]

[104] Douglas Richardson, Kimball G. Everingham, *Magna Carta Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families*, Salt Lake City: Douglas Richardson, 2011, pp. 83-4; 185.

characterised by hagiographic, didactic and moral poems, the second by romances, and the third by historical and political texts.[105] The following table summarises Turville-Petre's classification.

Hagiographic, didactic, and moral poems	**Romance**	**Historical and political (including Chronicle)**
(1) The Legend of Pope Gregory (3) The Life of Adam and Eve (4) Seynt Mergrete (5) Seynt Katerine (6) St Patrick's Purgatory (7) þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi and þe Soule (8) The Harrowing of Hell (9) The Clerk who would see the Virgin (10) Speculum Gy de Warewyke (12) The Life of St Mary Magdalene (13) The Nativity and Early Life of Mary (14) On the Seven Deadly Sins (15) The Paternoster (16) The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin (28) A Peniworþ of Witt (29) How Our Lady's Sauter was First Found (34) The Thrush and the Nightingale (35) The Sayings of St Bernard (36) Dauid þe King (39) The Four Foes of Mankind (42) Alphabetical Praise of Women	(2) The King of Tars (11) Amis and Amiloun (17) Sir Degare (18) The Seven Sages of Rome (19) Floris and Blancheflour (22) Guy of Warwick (couplets) (23) Guy of Warwick (stanzas) (24) Reinbroun (25) Sir Beues of Hamtoun (26) Of Arthour & of Merlin (30) Lay le Freine (31) Roland and Vernagu (32) Otuel a Kniȝt (33) Kyng Alisaunder (37) Sir Tristrem (38) Sir Orfeo (41) Horn Childe & Maiden Rimnild (43) King Richard	(20) The Sayings of the Four Philosophers (21) The Battle Abbey Roll (40) The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle (44) þe Simonie

In spite of the variety of genres, the texts seem to feature 'a shared perception of social roles and functions, and a shared concept of England, the state of its present and the contributions of its past.' Turville-Petre eventually concludes that 'the Auchinleck Manuscript is many things, but most importantly it is a handbook of the nation'.[106] In their introduction to the facsimile edition, Pearsall and Cunningham also outline a similar distinction adding that almost all types of English poetic writing of the period find a place in this collection. In Pearsall and Cunningham's view, the first category outlined by Turville-Petre could be further divided into saints' legends (items 1, 4, 5, 12),

[105] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p. 113. *þe Wenche þat Loved þe King* has been excluded since it fits none of the abovementioned categories.
[106] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 112.

other types of religious narrative (items 3, 6, 8, 9, 13, 16, 29), religious debates (items 7, 34), homiletic monitory pieces (items 10, 35, 39), and poems of religious instruction (items 14, 15, 36). The selection of romances is agreed upon by Turville-Petre, Pearsall and Cunningham (items 2, 11, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38, 41, 43), whereas the last category outlined by Turville-Petre could be further divided into chronicle (item 40), the list of Norman barons (item 21) and poems of satire and complaint (items 20, 42, 44).[107] If, on the one hand, *A Peniworþ of Witt* could be assimilated to the genre of moral poems, on the other, no room can be found in Turville-Petre's classification for the alleged *fabliau* preceding it. Both texts are classified in the facsimile edition as humorous tales (items 27, 28).[108]

However, these categories somehow seem too restrictive to encompass the whole variety of the Auchinleck items. In order to classify Middle English narrative poetry in general, J. A. Burrow resorts to the definition of 'scope' as something ruled by conventions and raising specific expectations in the audience. On the grounds of the subject narrative Middle English poems deal with, Burrow identifies three different categories: histories, lives and tales.[109] Histories are characterised by a canvass of intermingled tales in which multiple characters play their part. It is of little interest that the events narrated never took place, as histories themselves can be considered a 'literary phenomenon'.[110] Therefore, in *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, the legendary Brutus, King Hengist and King Arthur find their righteous place alongside historical kings, such as King Richard or King Edward I. Lives conversely deal with the deeds and the adventures of the eponymous hero 'from cradle to grave'. Therefore, no distinction can be traced between saints' and knights' *vitae*, as they are both characterised by the depiction of exemplary lives, marvels and heroic deaths.[111] Therefore,

[107] It might be worth noticing that *The Alphabetical Praise of Women* is classified in the facsimile edition as a poem of 'satire and complain', whereas according to Turville-Petre's classification, it should probably fall into the category: 'poem with moral or didactic intent'.
[108] Pearsall, Cunningham, p. viii.
[109] J. A. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and Their Work: Middle English Literature 1100-1500*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 71-2.
[110] Burrow, *Medieval Writers and Their Work*, p. 73.
[111] Burrow, *Medieval Writers and Their Work*, p. 74.

the lives of Saint Katherine and Saint Margaret as well as that of Guy of Warwick can be considered instances of the same scope.

The Latin word *vita* was used to describe as much the accounts of saints' lives as those of secular heroes. For instance, in the thirteenth-century manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Latin 3550, the Latin version of *Amis and Amiloun* is preceded by a rubric reading 'Incipit vita Amici et Ameli',[112] whereas in the early fourteenth century manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 108, *Havelock the Dane* is preceded by a rubric reading '<Incipit vita Hauelok> quondam Rex Anglie'.[113] Apart from a version of *King Horn*, the remaining items contained in Laud Misc. 108 are mainly devoted to saints' lives or to lay religious instruction. The presence of texts such as the *South English Legendary* (fols. 1-200), *The Sayings of St Bernard*, *The Vision of St Paul*, the *Dispute between the Body and the Soul*, *The Life of S. Alexis*, and *Somer Someday*, reinforces the impression that the distinction between religious and secular poems was all but straightforward. Gina Marie Hurley observes that the twenty-seven extant versions of *Amis and Amiloun* have conventionally been classified into two categories, hagiography and romance. However, the Middle English version of the text appears to resist any kind of classification and would thus require the creation of a new category. For instance, Ojar Kratins classifies it as 'secular hagiography', whereas for Susan Crane it would be a 'pious romance'.[114]

The lives of knights and saints are not only both identified as *vitae*, but also share similar characteristics in terms of content. The life of *Guy of Warwick* appears in fact to be pervaded by the

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[112] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Latin 3550, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10032479q/f151.item.zoom [accessed on 11/08/2021]

[113] Digital Bodleian, *Bodleian Library MS. Laud Misc.108*, https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/c5438c30-71dd-4cec-ac59-eb1e5a11f2a4/surfaces/5b2e394c-0c18-4bd8-a591-dbe509bba6d0/ [accessed on 25/03/2021] It might be worth considering that in the fifteenth-century manuscript London, British Library, Additional MS 18922 a Latin prose version of *Amis and Amiloun* is presented as a *historia*: 'Hystoria admirabilis et inaudite amicicie de Aurelio [potius Amelio] et Amico' [The story of the admirable and unheard-of friendship of Aurelius – or rather Amelius – and his friend] (my translation). British Library, *Explore Archives and Manuscripts*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?menuitem=0&fromTop=true&fromPreferences=false&fromEshelf=false&vid=IAMS_VU2 [accessed on 11/08/2021]

[114] Gina Marie Hurley, '"Togider alon": Isolation and Community in Narratives of Amis and Amiloun', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 119 (2020), pp. 68-69.

same pious undertones characterising that of Saint Alexis.[115] Guy of Warwick's life after his marriage might in fact mirror that of the Saint in his rejection of family bonds, as well as in his pious retirement before death. However, if on the one hand Guy of Warwick's and St Alexis's lives might share the features outlined by Barrow as generally characterising *lives*, on the other they are substantially different. Saint Alexis is entirely concerned with God and his detachment from the world is complete. Conversely, in spite of having renounced any form of recompense and renown, Guy of Warwick's actions can still be perceived as chivalric feats. His sense of justice prompts him to intervene in order to defend his country and to stand for baronial principles. He thus becomes a defender of secular justice, a role that St Alexis never takes on.[116] Starting from the thirteenth century insular romances were so involved in moral and religious issues that they had come to function as 'substantial guides for life'.[117] Scholars have hence found it necessary to create a new category for these texts, that of didactic and homiletic romances.[118] The last category outlined in Burrow's classification is that of 'romance tales'. The two Auchinleck lays *Sir Orfeo* and *Lay le Freine* can be considered instances of this category in that they revolve around specific episodes, such as a love story or an adventure, rather than reporting the hero's entire life.[119]

Given the limits presented by a genre-based classification, it might be worth trying to uncover possible threads running across the entire collection. Medieval miscellanies appear in fact to be characterised by thematic logic and the Auchinleck Manuscript might be no exception.[120] An in-depth analysis of its content reveals that the most widespread threads pervading the whole collection are related to the definition of appropriate femininity, faithful and unfaithful advisors and stewards, as well as good and bad kings. All these topics must have been perceived as extremely relevant to the

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[115] Susan Crane, *Insular Romance Politics, Faith and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature*, Berkeley: University of California, 1986, p. 109.
[116] Crane, *Insular Romance Politics, Faith and Culture*, pp. 110-1.
[117] Crane, *Insular Romance Politics, Faith and Culture*, p. 197.
[118] Crane, *Insular Romance Politics, Faith and Culture*, p. 103. This aspect will be further explored in Chapter 4.
[119] Burrow, *Medieval Writers and Their Work*, p. 75.
[120] Ian Johnson, 'A Sensibility of the Miscellaneous', in *Collecting, Organising and Transmitting Knowledge: Miscellanies in Late Medieval Europe*, edited by Sabrina Corbellini, Giovanna Murano, and Giacomo Signore, Turnhout: Brepols, 2018, p. 25.

contemporary political situation. Edward III had in fact just put an end to the reckless rule of his mother Isabella and her lover Mortimer. In 1326 Isabella had almost been acclaimed as a country saviour when she landed at the head of an army in order to destroy the terror regime enforced by Hugh Despenser.[121] However, by the following year this perception had radically changed as Isabella had started to run the country for her own enrichment and her lover, Roger Mortimer, was taking advantage of his key position at the court to amass wealth and estates. Furthermore, her alleged involvement in her husband's murder had irremediably undermined her reputation, so much so that the depiction of the Queen provided by the fourteenth-century chronicler Geoffrey Le Baker is a climax of deliberate insults: she is described as 'ferrea virago', 'truculenta leena', and 'femina crudelis'.[122] Any trace of femininity has disappeared from her. She is now equated to a *virago*, which according to the *MED* is a word contemptuously used to describe a woman who usurps a man's office.[123] The image of the lioness stands for a fierce and cruel woman.[124]

> Unde, non amore mota set furore commota, ferrea virago secreto cogitatu cepit expavescere, ne unquam per ecclesiam, miseris consuetam misereri, foret compulsa viro repudiato iterum impertire torum. Excogitavit enim quod a forciori homines indifferentes et pietatis alumnos in sui miseracionem provocaret, qui suos inimicos, quos ipsa supra ministros ordinavit, per adversitatum tolleranciam et omnium virtutum urberem fragranciam ad pietatem sui inclinavit. Talibus et aliis cogitatibus angustitata, truculenta leena, recurrens ad consilium sui magistri, sacerdotis Baal illius Herefordensis, ab ipso recepit ipsum responsum, quod certe sanguinem tetigit quando comes Edwardo suo consuanguineo compaciebatur. Constituit igitur femina crudelis, ex ordinacione magistri sui subdoli, episcopi predicti, quod Thomas de Corneye et Iohannes Maltravers, duo milites nequam, ipsum Edwardum de custodia comitis Leicestrie receptum ducerent quo vellent, ita quod nullus sui benevolus seu indifferens persona ipsum libere adiret, vel sciret ubi diu perendinaret.[125]

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[121] W. Mark Ormrod, *Edward III*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013, p. 48.
[122] Geoffrey le Baker, *Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Swynebroke*, edited by Maunde Thompson, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889, p. 29.
[123] *MED*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary [accessed on 10/08/2021] Virago was also used to convey the idea of wickedness, see Chaucer's *The Man of Law's Tale* 'O Sowdanesse, roote of iniquitee! | Virago, thou Semyrame the secounde! | O serpent under femynynytee' (ll. 258-60) Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer,* edited by Larry D. Benson and F. N. Robinson, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 91.
[124] *MED*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary [accessed on 10/08/2021]
[125] Geoffrey le Baker, *Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Swynebroke*, p. 29. 'For the queen was stirred not to love by these messages but to anger, for that iron lady in her secret thoughts began to be very afraid that the church, with its customary pity for the pitiful, might one day actually compel her to share again the bed of the husband she had repudiated. For she thought that a man, who, by his endurance of adversity and the rich fragrance of all his virtues, had brought his own enemies, whom she herself had placed as attendants over him, to take pity on him, would be much more likely to arouse the pity of men who did not know him and who were the very pupils of pity. Driven into a corner by these and other such reflections, the fierce lioness again sought advice from her master, the priest of Baal the bishop of Hereford, and received from him the actual reply that there was no doubt it was a matter of murder, if now the earl was suffering together with his kinsman Edward. So on the advice of her cunning master the bishop, the cruel queen decided that two evil knights, Thomas Gournay and John Maltravers, should pick up Edward from his keeper the earl of Leicester and then take him wherever they liked, provided that no friend or neutral was allowed free access to him or came to know where he was spending any length of time.' Geoffrey Le Baker, *The Chronicle of Geoffrey Le Baker of Swinbrook*, translated by David Preest, introduction and notes by Richard Barber, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012, p. 28.

Some of the texts in the Auchinleck Manuscript seem to have been conceived in order to create an array of progressively higher degrees of female perfection and piety. On one side of the array stands Eve as the cause of the Fall of humankind, whereas the Virgin Mary stands as her opposite, as the very embodiment of female perfection. The portrait of the Virgin Mary's exemplary life thus co-occurs with those of Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine, who demonstrated their unshakeable faith and resolute determination throughout their martyrdom. It might be worth considering that in the later Middle Ages the role of queens was equated with that of the Virgin Mary in their acting as intercessors between petitioners and kings.[126] Interestingly enough, the structure of the sacrament of penance, widely debated in the later Middle Ages, is explored through the story of another woman, Mary Magdalene. 'Mari þe sinful' (l. 10), the very embodiment of the penitent sinner. She demonstrates her true contrition by casting herself at Jesus Christ's feet and crying, 'Sche kneled adoun & sore wepe, | Sche wesche his fet wiþ hir tere' (ll. 27-8). True contrition at heart allows her to be forgiven for her past sins: 'Woman, for þe loue þou hast to me | Alle þine sinnes forȝiue y þe' (ll. 52-3). However, no penance can be considered sincere unless it determines a real change in the sinner's life. In this, Mary Magdalen's repentance is complete as she starts preaching the Word of God and dies a saint. In the middle of this array of pious femininity, one can find the heroines of romances, such as the faithful daughter of the Christian *King of Tars* or the devoted wife portrayed in *A Peniworþ of Witt.* On the opposite side of the array, Amiloun's wife, Beues' mother, the merchant's lover in *A Peniworþ of Witt* and the women depicted in *The Seven Sages of Rome* find their place as the embodiment of wickedness and perversity. Furthermore, the virtues that any woman should possess are not only sketched through *exempla*, but also through a systematic list, the *Alphabetical Praise of Women,* through which all the qualities and proper behaviours that should protect them from deceitful men are detailed.

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[126] Siobhain Bly Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchinleck Manuscript,* New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 67.

The theme of treacherous foreign queens also seems to hold centre stage. In *Of Arthour and of Merlin,* the treacherous Vortigern marries a Saracen princess and is cursed ever after for having entered such a match. His marriage triggers many other such matches between Saracens and Christians, provoking the corruption of English blood and mores.[127] Vortigern's realm thus can only be doomed to downfall, as unlike the Saracen Princess Josiane, in *Beues of Hamtoun*, Vortigern's wife does not convert to Christianity. Since in the decade in which the Auchinleck Manuscript was compiled, Queen Isabella had already been consigned to history as one of the She-Wolves of France,[128] it is almost impossible to resist a parallel between Vortigern's wife and Edward II's consort. Just as the Saracen Queen had contaminated Vortigern's realm, so Queen Isabella might have been perceived as inherently corrupt and corrupting her new homeland. Significantly, another foreign consort is portrayed in the Auchinleck Manuscript as deceitful and treacherous. Beues' mother, 'Þe kinges douȝter of Scotlonde' appears in fact to have cruelly overthrown her son and placed her lover at the head of the earldom.[129]

A spectrum of loyalty and faithfulness also emerges from the representation of stewards. On one side of the spectrum stands the treacherous Vortigern, on the other, the faithful steward of *Sir Orfeo*. The loyalty of stewards must also have been perceived as a theme of the utmost importance, as the stability of Edward II's realm had constantly been undermined by the King's inclination towards unscrupulous favourites.

In the *Chronicle,* the exemplary representation of good and bad kings culminates in the dichotomic description of the realms of King Richard I and his successor King John. Not only does the author devote an equally significant number of lines to each royal brother (148 lines are devoted to King Richard I, 100 to King John), but he also emphasises the stark contrast between the bravery and personal achievements of the first and the wanton cruelty of the second. Once again, an array is built up: on the one side stands King Richard I alongside King Hengist, respectively the champion of

[127] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity,* p. 183.
[128] Hilda Johnstone, 'Isabella, the She-Wolf of France', *History*, 21 (1936), p. 208.
[129] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity*, p. 94.

Christianity and the perfect king who rules with his parliament, on the other, the wicked King John. However, a bad king is not only intrinsically wicked, but also weak. Therefore, as stressed in both *Þe Simonie* and *The Saying of the Four Philosophers*, a bad king is also one who cannot counsel himself and heavily depends on his favourites' advice. Thus, Edward II's realm is inherently doomed to failure by his own weakness and inability to rule on his own. Since at the time the manuscript was created Edward III was still young and possibly inexperienced, the Auchinleck audience might have been led to wonder on which side of the array the newly anointed King would be.

One final remark should be made about the possible consequences of a division in literary genres. A study of French *fabliaux* carried out at the end of the nineteenth century by Joseph Bédier defines the *fabliaux* as 'bourgeois tales', portraying a non-courtly world and addressed to middle-class readers. Romances would conversely be meant for a courtly audience. Bédier's theory might find support in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, as the Knight's tale is a courtly romance, whereas the Miller's tale is a *fabliau*, thus essentially mirroring the social class to which the two narrators belong. Nonetheless, as Burrow observes, the *Canterbury Tales* are fictional; therefore, no straightforward interdependence between literary genres and social classes can really be established.[130] Later, Per Nykrog would in fact demonstrate that since *fabliaux* were also popular within the courtly environment, fictional social settings cannot be used as evidence to determine the social class of the intended audience.[131] Therefore, the presence of many romances in the Auchinleck Manuscript cannot be used as evidence of an exclusively courtly audience.[132]

[130] Burrow, *Medieval Writers and Their Work*, pp. 82-3.
[131] Per Nykrog, *Les Fabliaux*, Geneva: Droz, 1973, pp. 27; 227.
[132] One might also argue that romances were also popular amongst middle-class audiences. The spreading of this literary genre across lower classes would not necessarily imply some form of social aspiration, but rather an equally widespread interest for courtliness and history. Furthermore, although women have left few traces of their activities as romance readers, it seems reasonable to suspect that they were also part of the intended audience of these texts. Carol M. Meale, '"Gode men | Wiues maydnes and alle men": Romance and Its Audiences', in *Readings in Medieval English Romance*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994, pp. 220-2.

1.8 Language and Metre

Literary scholarship on the Auchinleck Manuscript has frequently focused on its connection with the construction of an English national identity, especially with reference to the almost exclusive use of Middle English. Miscellaneous manuscripts intended for moral instruction as well as for entertainment usually included texts in Latin and French, as well as 'household items'. This manuscript conversely seems to show considerable interest in everything related to English history and literature.[133] However, it has widely been acknowledged that the language used in the Auchinleck Manuscript is far from being close to the Old-English-derived lexicon of Laȝamon's *Brut*. It conversely appears to be significantly interspersed with words of French origin.[134] And yet, the real nature of the language used might have been considered a rather marginal issue in the nationalistic debate. To put it another way, the use of any variety of Middle English, with whatever degree of French influence, might have been perceived as sufficient to claim that the collection had been compiled for the sake of those English people who were unfamiliar with any foreign language. Although a degree of French influence might consistently be detected in both language and themes, the ideological stance underlying this collection would equally seem to point towards a nationalistic discourse aimed at constructing a national identity distinct from that of France. Furthermore, the selection of the texts might involve not only the creation of an English literary canon, but also the (re)appropriation of foreign literary traditions. Significantly, in his almost contemporary chronicle, Robert Mannyng complains about the necessity of turning to French 'bokes' in order to report the story of king Arthur's reign, due to the scarcity of English sources, thus possibly advocating the rebalancing of the role of the two keepers of the Arthurian tradition.[135]

In alle landes wrot men of Arthur,
Hys noble dedes of honur:
In ffraunce men wrot, & it men wryte,

[133] *The Auchinleck Manuscript*, edited by David Burnley and Alison Wiggins, https://auchinleck.nls.uk/editorial/importance.html [accessed on 20/05/2020]

[134] For a detailed study on the lexicon of French origin in the Auchinleck Manuscript, see Rory G. Critten, Cyrille Gay-Crosier, Davide Picca, 'French Lexis in the Auchinleck Manuscript: A Digital-philological Approach, *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 37(2022), pp. 354-74.

[135] Mannyng also seems to be willing to re-patriate a history that for far too long had exclusively been written in French. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *The Idea of the Vernacular*, p. 13.

But herd haue we of hym but lyte;
Þere-fore of hym more men fynde
In farre bokes, als ys kynde,
Þan we haue in þys lond:
Þat we haue, þer men hit fond;
Til Domesday men schalle spelle,
&of Arthures dedes talke & telle. (ll. 10605-14)[136]

In Mannyng's views, the time had come for the life of the legendary king to be celebrated in English as well. Romance does not appear to be the sole genre involved in the process of English literary appropriation. Although in the Auchinleck poems the struggle between Christians and Saracens possibly takes on more insular concerns, the emphasis on crusading might be part of the process of appropriation of another literary genre of French origin, the *chanson de geste*. Many of the texts generally categorised as romances in the Auchinleck Manuscript retain in fact features typical of the epic genre.[137]

In the Auchinleck collection, Middle English does not appear to be the mere means whereby the stories of saints, heroes and kings are bequeathed, but rather an extremely relevant topic in its own right. In the prologue to *Of Arthour and of Merlin,* the author states that, although many nobles can still speak French, many others cannot and thus English is the obvious choice to reach them all.[138]

Of Freynsch no Latin nil y tel more
Ac on J[n]glisch ichil tel þerfore
Riȝt is þat J[n]glische vnderstond
Þat was born in Jnglond.
Freynsche vse þis gentil man
Ac euerich Jnglische can;
Mani noble ich haue yseiẏe
Þat no Freynsche couþe seye,
Biginne ichil for her loue
Bi Ihesus leue þat sitt aboue
On Inglische tel mi tale –
God ous sende soule hale. (ll. 19-30)

At the beginning of *King Richard,* the author not only supports his claim by declaring that no one amongst his acquaintances can understand French, but also seems to push his point even further by concluding that since the French language has generated French heroes, by the same token, the

[136] Robert Manning of Brunne, *The Chronicle of Robert Manning of Brunne A.D. 1338*, vol 1, edited by Frederick J. Furnivall, London: Longman, 1887, p. 370.
[137] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity,* p. 21.
[138] Crane, *Insular Romance Politics, Faith and Culture*, p. 10.

English language is supposed to generate English heroes. In other words, the time has come to praise the 'noble gestes' of the 'dou3ti kni3tes of Inglond'.

> As þis romaunce of Freyns wrou3t,
> Þat mani lewed no knowe nou3t,
> In gest as-so we seyn;
> Þis lewed no can Freyns non;
> Among an hundred vnneþe on,
> In lede is nou3t to leyn. (ll. 19-24)

The English national identity would thus be nourished not only by the deeds of English heroes, but also by the language that was perceived as the most appropriate to praise the English long-standing heroic tradition.

However, if on the one hand the strong connection romances appear to establish with England's historical and legendary past make them the ideal place to state the reasons for using Middle English instead of French or Latin, on the other they are far from being the sole stage devoted to such a debate. For instance, the closing lines of *The life of Saint Mary Magdalen* are equally concerned with the use of English as an inclusive language.

> Ich biseche 3ou alle þat han yherd
> Of þe Maudelain hou it ferd
> Þat 3e biseche al for him
> Þat þis stori in Jnglisse rim
> Out of Latin haþ ywrou3t,
> For alle men Latin no conne nou3t (ll. 666-71)

This redactor claims that he is translating his authoritative Latin source in English for the sake of that same 'lewed' audience mentioned by Mannyng in his *Chronicle*. However, considering that the theme of translation into English is pervasive in many items from the collection, one might conclude that English was perceived not only as an inclusive language, but also as possessing the status and dignity to compete with Latin and French.

The intentional use of Middle English thus seems to have been aimed at celebrating an English national identity eventually unyoked from the French influence.[139] The debate around the use of Middle English must have been perceived as extremely relevant at the turn of the fourteenth century,

[139] Larissa Tracy, 'Arthur, Charlemagne, and the Auchinleck Manuscript: Constructing English National Identity in Early Middle Ages', *Early Middle English,* 1 (2019), p. 83.

as it had deliberately been manipulated by King Edward I to reinvigorate his anti-French propaganda. The myth that the French had wished to wipe out the English language was in fact first used by Edward I in 1295 and then revived by his grandson, Edward III, during the Hundred Years' War.[140]

> Nunc vero praedictis fraude et nequitia non contentus, ad expugnationem regni nostri classe maxima et bellatorum copiosa multitudine congregatis, cum quibus regnum nostrum et regni ejusdem incolas hostiliter jam invasit, linguam Anglicam, si conceptae iniquitatis proposito detestabili potestas correspondeat, quod Deus avertat, omnino de terra delere proponit.[141]

Many scholars have contended that this claim is not to be interpreted as referring to the destruction of the English language, but rather to that of the English people,[142] thus essentially implying that *gens* and *lingua* were perceived as synonyms.[143] However, since at that point England was far from having reached any linguistic unity, this claim should solely be interpreted in terms of political propaganda.[144] Given that this statement was part of a writ of summons addressed to the clergy, who had the closest contact with people, one is under the impression that it was uttered to appeal to popular sentiment.[145] Edward I was in fact acutely aware of the potential of the Church in terms of political propaganda. As part of his propaganda in support of his Scottish campaigns, the King made generous oblations to monasteries and churches and asked them to instruct the worshippers to pray for his military success.[146]

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[140] Michael Prestwich, *The Three Edwards: War and State in England, 1272-1377*, New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 187; David Green, 'National Identities and the Hundred Years War', in *Fourteenth Century England, Volume 6*, edited by Chris Given-Wilson, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010, p. 119.

[141] William Stubbs, *Select Charters and Other Illustrations of English Constitutional History, from the Earliest Times to the Reign of Edward the First,* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1921, p. 480. 'Now, however, not satisfied with the before-mentioned fraud and injustice, having gathered together for the conquest of our kingdom a very great fleet, and an abounding multitude of warriors, with which he has made a hostile attack on our kingdom and the inhabitants of the same kingdom, he now proposes to destroy the English language altogether from the earth, if his power should correspond to the detestable proposition of the contemplated injustice, which God forbid.' *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, vol 1, translated by E. P. Cheyney, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1897, pp. 33-4.

[142] Malcom Vale, 'Language, Politics and Society: The Use of the Vernacular in the Later Middle Ages', *The English Historical Review,* 120 (2005), p. 20.

[143] R. R. Davies, 'Presidential Address: The Peoples of Britain and Ireland, 1100-1400: IV Language and Historical Mythology', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 7 (1997), p. 2.

[144] Vale, 'Language, Politics and Society', p. 20. Not only did many English nobles, including the king himself, certainly speak Anglo-Norman in their private and public exchanges, but Middle English itself was characterised by extensive regional variation.

[145] Vale, 'Language, Politics and Society', p. 20.

[146] D. W. Burton, 'Requests for Prayers and Royal Propaganda under Edward I', in *Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference: 1989,* edited by P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd, Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991, p. 29.

Yet, the identification of language with country was certainly not Edward I's invention. It appears to have already been well established in the twelfth century when, in his *Description of Wales,* the historian Gerald of Wales describes the Welsh people as 'men of Welsh tongue'.[147] William Wallace as well was reported to have spared only those who could speak no English. Consequently, the wars against Scotland – and subsequently against France – might have merely reinforced the key role that language already played in the creation of a national identity.[148] Nonetheless, language is not the sole pillar upon which the identity of a community is based. Shared historical roots are in fact equally paramount in the creation of a national identity.[149] The Middle English translation of the Latin word *historia* is *ystyr*, 'meaning', 'significance', thus possibly implying that the meaning of an entire community should be sought in its history. It might be worth considering that in his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, Bede had already created this link between history and country, by defining the English as a single community characterised by a common history.[150] The use of Middle English in historical writing cannot but reinforce the already intimate connection existing amongst country, history, and language. Therefore, Mannyng's translation of Peter Langtoft's Anglo-Norman *Chronicle* might have marked the beginning of 'linguistic nationalism'.[151]

Furthermore, according to Turville-Petre, writing in English in the first half of the fourteenth century was no accidental choice, but rather a political decision prompted by the desire to address either the rulers or the ruled.[152] In his chronicle, Mannyng seems to confirm this association between language and social class, as the historian claims he is writing in simple English for the sake of common people. However, only a few lines later, the author indulges in a lengthy list of erudite sources, possibly intended for an audience with deep literary knowledge.[153] Nevertheless, one might argue that this is not evidence in itself that his audience was familiar with the sources mentioned.

[147] Davies, 'Presidential Address', p. 2.
[148] Davies, 'Presidential Address', p. 14.
[149] This aspect will be further explored in Chapter 3.
[150] Davies, 'Presidential Address', p. 19.
[151] Davies, 'Presidential Address', p. 3.
[152] Turville-Petre, 'Politics and Poetry in the Early Fourteenth Century: The Case of Robert Mannyng's Chronicle', *The Review of English Studies*, 39 (1988), p. 1.
[153] Turville-Petre, 'Politics and Poetry in the Early Fourteenth Century', p. 5.

Mannyng might conversely have wanted his chronicle to be part of the literary canon. He might essentially have claimed for himself the same authority as his sources'.[154] Therefore, Mannyng seems more prompted by the desire to 'repatriate' a history that has far too often been written in French,[155] than by that to appeal to a more inclusive audience. This apparent contradiction has often been dismissed either considering it as literary fiction or identifying the uneducated intended audience with the rising middle class.[156] Although Mannyng does not seem to question the righteousness of William the Conqueror's claim to the English throne, he insists that the French-speaking ruling class had subdued the native English aristocracy.[157] In this light, Mannyng appears to identify his intended audience with the unjustly deprived native English.[158] This hypothesis might find support in Mannyng's giving great prominence to the deeds of England's ancient kings, whereas the Norman invasion is labelled as the fifth plague that affected the country, yet another invasion that enslaved those who once were free.

> The fift sorow þer after com, whan William conqueroure. [Quinta plaga.]
> þat aryued on þis lond, Harald he slouh in stoure,
> & barons oþer inouh, þat died in þe feld,
> þe lond lese þe armes, changed is þe scheld.
> Siþen he & his haf had þe lond in heritage,
> þat þe Inglis haf so lad, þat þei lyue in seruage,
> He sette þe Inglis to be þralle, þat or was so fre.
> He þat bigan it alle in þe geste may ȝe se.[159]

[154] Mannyng's 'lewed' audience should not be intended as lacking Latinity, but rather as not necessarily belonging to the clergy. The accessibility of Mannyng's *Chronicle* should thus be intended as a way to engage with the historiographical insular tradition at large. Matthew Fisher, 'Vernacular Historiography' in *Medieval Historical Writing: Britain and Ireland, 500-1500*, edited by Jennifer Jahner, Emily Steiner, Elizabeth M. Tyler, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, p. 341. The act of translating can also be considered an implicit challenge to the authority of the source text. Rhonda Knight, 'Stealing Stonehenge: Translation, Appropriation, and Cultural Identity in Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Chronicle*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 32 (2002), p. 45.

[155] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999, p. 19.

[156] Turville-Petre, 'Politics and Poetry in the Early Fourteenth Century', pp. 5-6.

[157] 'Mannyng has no doubt that William was Edward the Confessor's rightful heir; what Harold's falseness and their own ungodliness brought on the English was not rule by a Norman, but rule won by conquest – with the consequent "seruage."' Coleman, 'Strange Rhyme', p. 1228. Mannyng's viewpoint on William the Conqueror seems thus to conform to the traditional narrative created by the first Anglo-Norman chroniclers, such as Henry of Huntington, William of Malmesbury and Ordericus Vitalis. Elizabeth Salter, *English and International: Studies in the Literature, Art and Patronage of Medieval England*, edited by Derek Pearsall and Nicolette Zeeman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 6.

[158] Turville-Petre, 'Politics and Poetry in the Early Fourteenth Century', p. 27.

[159] Robert of Brunne, *Peter Langtoft's Chronicle, (as Illustrated and Improv'd by Robert of Brunne) from the Death of Cadwalader to the End of K. Edward the First's Reign*, vol 2, edited by Thomas Hearne, Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1725, p. 8.

The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle seems to go in the same direction, as the author gives great prominence to the ancient and legendary English past, whereas he dismisses the Norman invasion in only four lines as an act of 'vilanie' against the rightful King Harold Godwinson. Apparently, there is no linguistic stand to introduce an almost entirely English-written chronicle, as in Mannyng's; nonetheless, in the very first lines, the author clarifies that he is about to tell the story of the country as it was narrated in the *Brut*, 'As þe Brout it telleþ' (l. 4).[160] However, this is not a summarised and updated translation of the popular Anglo-Norman prose chronicle in the strictest sense, but rather an instance of a now lost version of the Middle English *Liber Regum Angliae*.[161] The Auchinleck redactor's reference to the *Brut* might have been aimed at introducing the translatory dimension that will be further explored not only in the prologue to *King Richard,* 'þis romaunce of Freyns wrouȝt' (l. 19), but also in *The Speculum Guy of Warwick*, in *The Paternoster* and in *David the King*.[162] Furthermore, since the redactor defines his tale as 'fair', thus both true and good for moral edification – 'ȝe schal here a wel fair tale' (l. 10) – he seems to encourage his audience to take inspiration for their conduct from the *exempla* provided by England's ancient past.[163]

As stressed by Davies quoting Isidore of Seville, language was paramount in the creation of identities in general, 'Quia ex linguis gentes, non de gentibus linguae exortae sunt'.[164] Consequently, language could masterfully be used by political propaganda not only as a means to create a shared identity, but also as a source of national pride. And yet English was certainly not the sole language used to praise England's legendary past; Langtoft's *Chronicle* proves all too well that Anglo-Norman epic *laisses* of alexandrines could equally be used to the same purpose. Furthermore, the definition of England as a nation was a complex one, as at the beginning of the fourteenth century the King's

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[160] The first four lines of the Auchinleck version appear to be an addition of that redactor. *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, p. xlvii.
[161] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, p. xlv.
[162] The red rubric placed at the top of *The Paternoster* reads 'the pater noster undo on englissch'.
[163] *MED*, 'fair' https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary [accessed on 15/08/2021]
[164] 'For nations are born from languages, not languages from nations' (my translation) Davies, 'Presidential Address', p. 9.

as well as his nobles' dominions still included areas in the continent.[165] Therefore, given the extension of the estates of English noblemen over areas of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as the degree of dialect variation existing in England in the fourteenth century, one is under the impression that the definition of Middle English as the language of the nation was yet another tool in the hands of political propaganda. The analysis of the historical context might be used to determine the target of such a propaganda and thus cast a new light on the intended audience of this manuscript.

If on the one hand, this collection might have belonged to an aristocratic family whose ancestors took part in the Crusades,[166] on the other, the linguistic choice seems to point at middle-class patronage. Anglo-Norman would in fact have been perceived as a more suitable choice for an aristocratic audience.[167] Considering that any English lord of considerable standing was certainly fluent in French and that Edward III's court could 'claim to be the centre of French-speaking world',[168] one might wonder why the King and his most powerful nobles should concern themselves with the use of Middle English. The answer might lie in Edward III's effective use of propaganda. The King might have been aware of the key role language could play in terms of the spreading of nationalistic ideas and been willing to exploit it in order to foster feelings of national identity in his subjects. As stressed by Mark Ormrod, shortly before the outbreak of the Hundred Year's War, Edward III worked hard to convince those who should bear the burden of the war costs that the conflict was inevitable if the dignity of their homeland was to be preserved. In 1337, Edward III thus ordered 'the holding of special meetings of the county courts and local assemblies of clergy at which

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[165] However, one should consider that 'the English possessions in France did not belong to the realm of England, but to the king of England as an individual.' Richard Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, London: Penguin, 2013, p. 36.
[166] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 136.
[167] Pearsall, 'The Auchinleck Manuscript Forty Years On', p. 13. Although the Auchinleck Manuscript contains several romances derived from Anglo-Norman sources, this cannot be used as evidence that these translations were made to meet the requirements of a newly literate audience who could only understand English. 'Knowledge of French was more widespread than has perhaps always been supposed.' Carol M. Meale, 'Patrons, Buyers and Owners: Book Production and Social Status', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, edited by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 217.
[168] Michael Bennett, 'France in England: Anglo-French Culture in the Reign of Edward III' in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c. 1100-c.1500,* edited by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, York: York University Press, 2009, p. 327.

his commissioners would expound "in English", on the reasons for the war.'[169] And yet given the hectic pace at which society was changing, as well as the complicated political situation the country was undergoing at the turn of the fourteenth century, no evidence seems to allow any definite conclusion about the patron's identity. However tempting the association to a middle-class patronage might seem on linguistic grounds, one should consider that the royal household cannot be taken as representative of all English nobility. Therefore, this collection might not necessarily have been conceived for a lord of considerable standing, but rather for the small country gentry who had to bear the heaviest burden of war. Its promoting a sense of national identity might thus have been in line with the contemporary propaganda aimed at gaining their political and financial support for the King's military campaigns.

One final remark should be made about the choice of metre. As stressed by Rhiannon Purdie, in Middle English literature, tail-rhyme came to be indissolubly connected with romance. How this occurred is still a matter of conjecture, since tail-rhyme romances appear all but inherently English, as they are the combination between a genre native to French literature and a stanza form developed in the continent. Furthermore, although in England the tail-rhyme was used for narrative material in both Middle English and Anglo-Norman, tail-rhyme romances seem unique to Middle English literature, as there are no extant examples of this combination of metre and literary genre in either Anglo-Norman, or French. The Auchinleck Manuscript thus appears of paramount importance in the study of the development of tail-rhyme, since not only does it contain the earliest extant examples of tail-rhyme romances in Middle English,[170] but it also seems to elevate tail-rhyme stanzas to the very metre of the Matter of England. English heroes would thus have found an equally prestigious alternative to the French *laisses* in order to see their deeds celebrated. Purdie furthers this point by emphasising that since none of the tail-rhyme romances contained in the Auchinleck appears to have a tail-rhyme antecedent, the scribes must have taken much pain to rework them in a different metre,

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[169] Ormrod, *Edward III,* p. 193.
[170] Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 93.

which was by far more difficult to compose than couplets. Therefore, the scribes might deliberately have recast these romances in tail-rhyme, possibly in order to exploit an already established literary association. Purdie concludes that this association of meter and genre might have been aimed at anglicising Anglo-Norman romances.

However, the Auchinleck presents roughly half its texts in tail-rhyme, whereas the others are composed either in couplets or in more sophisticated rhyme schemes. Amongst the fourteen poems either entirely or partially written in tail-rhyme only eight appear to be romances, the other being poems of religious and moral instruction. This comes as no surprise, as at the beginning of the fourteenth century, tail-rhyme was already strongly associated with pious writing in Anglo-Norman as well.[171] The use of tail-rhyme for didactic and spiritually edifying poems in the Auchinleck Manuscript would thus reinforce the idea that the scribes were aware of the existing connection between this type of stanza and a long-standing tradition of pious and religious writing.[172] This metre being selected for some of the romances in the Auchinleck might thus have been aimed at providing them with a specific interpretative key, which would prevent the audience from considering them as mere entertainment.[173] In this light, the use of tail-rhyme stanzas for *The King of Tars*, *Amis and Amiloun*, and *Roland and Vernagu* would reinforce their connection with religious and moral edification, as well as with the genre of *chanson de geste*.

In order to determine whether a connection between subject and metre can definitely be established, all the texts from the Auchinleck Manuscript have been roughly divided into three categories depending on their literary genre, as well as grouped according to their metrical form.[174]

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[171] Rhiannon Purdie, *Anglicising Romance: Tail-Rhyme and Genre in Medieval English Literature,* Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008, p. 1.
[172] Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, pp. 9; 93.
[173] Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 6.
[174] *The Battle Abbey Roll* and *þe Wenche þat Loved þe King* have been excluded from this analysis.

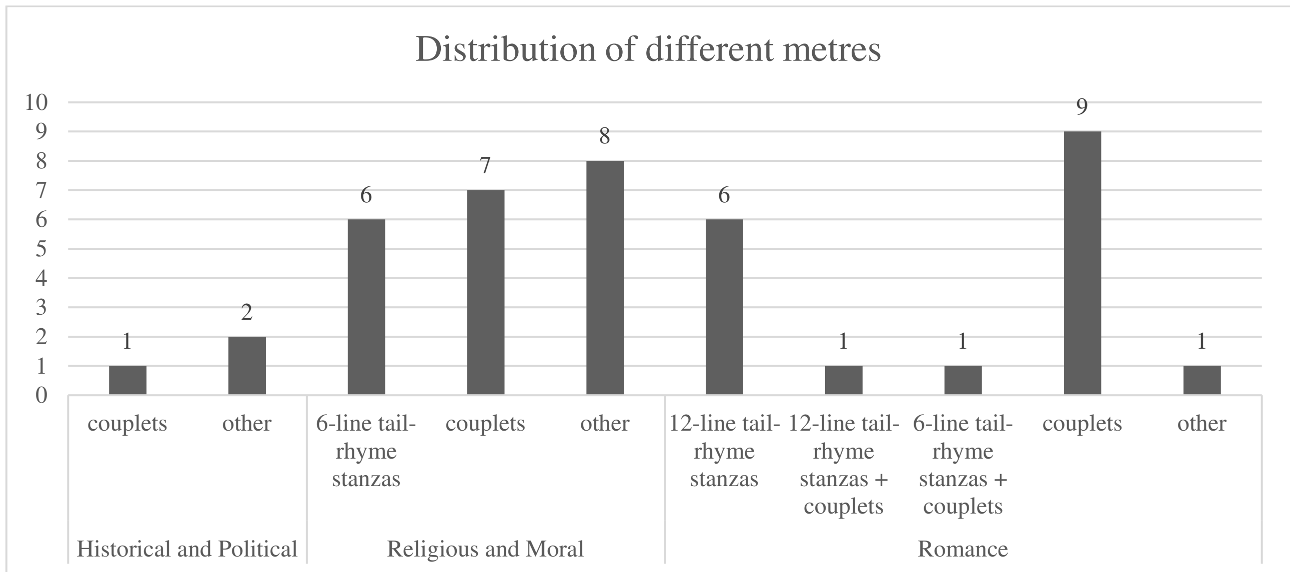


Figure 1. Distribution of different metres across the Auchinleck Manuscript

An in-depth analysis of the distribution of metrical forms throughout the collection reveals that couplets and tail-rhyme stanzas (either six-line or twelve-line stanzas) are evenly distributed across the outlined categories. However, twelve-line tail-rhyme stanzas are almost exclusively used for romances (*Beues of Hamtoun* appears to be the only romance having 474 lines in six-line tail-rhyme stanzas followed by couplets), whereas six-line tail-rhyme stanzas are used for texts with moral and didactic intent. Therefore, in the Auchinleck Manuscript, an interdependence between metre and literary genre seems to exist between twelve-line tail-rhyme stanzas and romance. This solemn form of tail-rhyme might thus have been perceived as the most suitable candidate to replace French epic *laisses*.[175]

Thought should be also given to the alternation of two distinct metrical forms in *King Richard*. A prologue in twelve-line tail-rhyme stanza is in fact followed by a poem entirely written in couplets. Since these initial twelve lines are unique to this manuscript, they are likely an addition of the Auchinleck redactor. This addition might have been aimed at establishing a connection between this poem and the other tail-rhyme romances in the collection.[176] According to Purdie, since in the Auchinleck Manuscript, no poem belonging to the Matter of England is in a metre other than the tail-

[175] Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 90.
[176] Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 101.

rhyme, this relation between genre and metre must already have been perceived as firmly established.[177] However, this metrical form does not appear to have been equally enthusiastically embraced by everyone. Mannyng seems in fact rather critical of the use of tail-rhyme,[178] as in the introduction to his chronicle, he labels this metre as 'strange ryme' unsuitable for his 'lewed' audience.

> I made it not forto be praysed,
> bot at þe lewed men were aysed.
> If it were made in ryme couwee,
> or in strangere or enterlace,
> þat rede Inglis it ere inowe,
> þat couthe not haf coppled a kowe,
> þat outhere in couwee or in baston
> som suld haf ben fordon,
> so þat fele men þat it herde
> suld not witte howe þat it ferde. (ll. 83-92)[179]

In Mannyng's views, a connection between language, metre, literary genre, and register does seem to exist; nevertheless, tail-rhyme stanzas are perceived as an equally sophisticated replacement for Langtoft's Anglo-Norman *laisses*. For the benefit of that same audience who cannot understand either French or Latin, he thus advocates for the use of a less sophisticated metre.

Significantly, he also observes that King Arthur's legendary life and deeds were first celebrated in French prose romances. Yet, English redactors seem to be unable to imitate this text form, due either to their lack of appropriate skills or possibly to the unsuitability of the English language for prose narratives. The choice of couplets or tail-rhyme stanzas thus extends well beyond the relationship between content and metre by encompassing the choice of the form perceived as the most appropriate for a given language: prose is the very form of French romances.

> Ther haue men bokes of al his lyf
> Ther are his merueilles red ful ryf;
> That we of hym here alle rede,
> There were they writen ilka dede.
> Thyse grete bokes so faire langage,
> Writen & spoken of Fraunces vsage,
> That neuere was writen thorow Englischemen,
> Swilk stile to speke, kynde ne can,
> But Frensche men wryten hit in prose,

[177] Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 101. The definition of Matter of England will be explored in Chapter 4.
[178] Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 2.
[179] Robert Manning of Brunne, *The Chronicle of Robert Manning of Brunne A.D. 1338*, vol 1, edited by Frederick J. Furnivall, London: Longman, 1887, p. 3.

Right as he died, hym for to alose. (ll. 10967-76)[180]

A similar relation seems to be established in the tail-rhyme prologue to *King Richard,* where the redactor directly relates the 'folk of Fraunce' (l. 10) with the romances of 'Rouland' and 'Oliuer', of 'Alisander and Charlmeyn', of 'Ector' and 'Danys le fiz Oger', as well as of 'Arthour and Gaweyn', essentially listing the heroes of the Matter of France, those of the Matter of Britain, as well as those of the Matter of Rome. The status of the Matter of England is thus raised to the ranks of the greatest. A new awareness seems to have been raised and thus a new language and possibly a new metre are now perceived as essential in order to celebrate the deeds of the 'douȝti kniȝtes of Inglond' (l. 28).

[180] Robert Manning of Brunne, *The Chronicle of Robert Manning of Brunne A.D. 1338*, vol 1, p. 383.

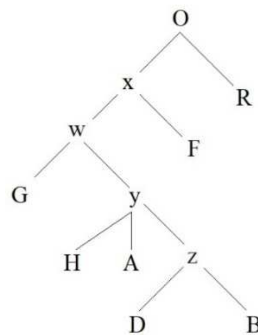
2 A Nationalistic View of History: *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*

The *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* – also known as the *Liber Regum Angliae* – is a 2361-line chronicle reporting the history of England from its legendary foundation to the beginning of Edward III's reign. The redactor of the Auchinleck *Chronicle* is believed to have expanded and reworked the content of a now lost version of the *Liber Regum Angliae*.[1] He also appears to have carefully selected the sections to expand not only to provide a specific idea of England's legendary past, but also to make it relevant to a London audience.[2] Significantly, just like *Guy of Warwick*, *Beues of Hamtoun, Kyng Alisaunder, Sir Tristrem,* and *King Richard,* the Auchinleck *Chronicle* is placed at the beginning of a new fascicle, thus possibly implying that it was conceived as some sort of framework into which other items in the collection are incorporated and provided with an interpretative key: in Turville-Petre's words, the 'backbone to which the historical texts are attached'.[3]

The *Liber Regum Angliae* survives in seven manuscripts and three different redactions. The A redaction survives in a sole manuscript, London, British Library Royal 12 C XII (R),[4] compiled around 1320-40, in the area of the West Midlands. This version reports the history of the country from Brutus to the beheading of Piers Gaveston, in 1312. The B redaction also survives in a sole West Midland manuscript, compiled in the fifteenth century, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library Ff.5.48 (F). This version reports the history of England from its foundation by Brutus to the beginning of Edward II's reign. The Auchinleck Manuscript (A) belongs to the C redaction alongside other four manuscripts: London, British Library Additional 19677 (B), dating back to the last decade of the fourteenth century,[5] the fifteenth-century manuscript, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library

[1] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p. 108.
[2] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p. 109.
[3] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p. 112.
[4] In brackets, the reference provided by Zettl in his edition of the chronicle. *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, edited by Ewald Zettl, London: Oxford University Press, 1935. Given the chronological proximity of this version of the chronicle – R – with that contained in the Auchinleck Manuscript, it will be used in the following sections as a term of comparison to highlight the differences between the two redactions. (See also Appendix 5)
[5] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, p. xi.

Dd.14.2 (D), the early-fourteenth-century manuscripts Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawl. poet. 145 – (H), and London, British Library Cotton Caligula A IX (C). The MS Additional 19677 version also begins with the foundation of the country by Brutus and ends with a prayer for the young king Edward II, whereas MS Dd 14 2 appears to be divided into three parts: the first from Brutus' arrival to the death of Edward I and the beginning of Edward II's realm; the second from the Edward III's accession to the throne to the coronation of Henry VI; the last reporting Henry VI's reign. The manuscripts Rawl. poet. 145 and Cotton Caligula A IX contain the chronicle in a fragmentary version. An Anglo-Norman translation of the C redaction appears in the early-fourteenth-century manuscript Cambridge, Cambridge University Library Gg.1.1 (G) alongside Langtoft's *Chronicle*. The reputed interrelation amongst the extant manuscripts is reconstructed by Zettl in his 1935 edition of the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* as follows.[6]



The Auchinleck version seems to be peculiar as compared to these other redactions, not only because it appears to be twice as long as any other extant version of the *Liber Regum Angliae*, but also because the account of Brutus' arrival is preceded by another instance of foundation myth: the story of Albina. The *Chronicle* shows an evident disproportion between the lines devoted to the kings who ruled before William the Conqueror (1974 lines) and those who ruled after him (around 400 lines).[7] This redactor might thus have attempted to create a sense of national identity by evoking an English heroic past predating the Norman invasion. Furthermore, not only is the Norman Conquest

[6] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, p. xlv.

[7] The other extant versions of the *Liber Regum Angliae* also show a similar disproportion. For instance, in the MS Royal 12 C XII, 890 out of 1025 lines are devoted to the kings who ruled the country before William the Conqueror. Therefore, the *Liber Regum Angliae* might generally have been conceived to celebrate a remote and illustrious past, rather than to provide an accurate account of the realm of more recent kings.

dismissed in a mere couple of lines and reported in a significantly different way from the contemporary A redaction, but it is also represented as one of the most disruptive moments in the entire English history. In MS Royal 12 C XII (R), the Battle of Hastings is the only event introduced with a rubric, possibly conceived to draw the reader's attention to the most important episode in the chronicle (Plate 8). This might come as no surprise as the *Liber Regum Angliae* is generally believed to have drawn upon William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, as well as upon Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle.* In both source chronicles, William the Conqueror is depicted as Edward the Confessor's legitimate heir, the very flower of chivalry, who brought prosperity to the country.[8] However, in the Auchinleck version, the rhyme 'Normondye' / 'cheualerie' is replaced with 'Normandye' / 'vilanie', thus providing a significant shift in the interpretation of the Norman conquest.[9]

> Willam bastard of Normondye
> Him [Harold Godwinson] slouȝ, & þat was vilanie.
> Harold liþe at Waltham.
> & Willam bastard þat þis lond wan
> (*Auchinleck Manuscript*, ll. 1971-82)

> þÞo com wiþ gret cheualerie
> Willa*m* Bastard of Normandie
> Ant Engelond al he won ·
> Ant hueld hit ase ys kynedom ·
> King harald he ouercom
> Ant lette him to deþe don
> ¶ Kyng Harald ful ywys
> At Waltham yburied ys ·
> Ant þenne Willa*m* Bastard
> Hueld al þis lond to hys part
> Ant þo he made sauntȝ fayle
> Þe abbaye of þe bataille ·
> (*MS Royal 12 C XII*, ll. 902-13)[10]

The author of the Auchinleck *Chronicle* seems to hold William the Conqueror responsible for Harold Godwinson's death, whereas in William of Malmesbury's and Robert of Gloucester's the Anglo-Saxon king is reported to have been killed by a stray arrow that transfixed one of his eyes.

> Haroldus, non contentus munere imperatorio ut hortaretur alios, militis offitium sedulo exsequebatur; sepe hostem comminus uenientem ferire, ut nullus impune accederet quin statim uno ictu equus et eques prociderent; quapropter, ut dixi, eminus letali hirundine ictus mortem impleuit.

[8] William of Malmesbury*, Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings* vol 1, edited and translated by R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, iii.240-4, pp. 452-7.
[9] Significantly, in *Beues of Hamtoun*, a similar rhyming couplet can also be detected, 'Wiþ wonder gret cheualrie, | And do vs schame and vileinie' (ll. 2217-8).
[10] All quotations from the chronicle contained in MS Royal 12 C XII are derived from my semi-diplomatic transcription of the text (See Appendix 5).

> Iacentis femur unus militum gladio proscidit; unde a Willelmo ignominiae notatus, quod rem ignauam et pudendam fecisset, militia pulsus est. (III.243)[11]

Significantly, although the Auchinleck Manuscript contains the supposed list of the Norman barons who landed alongside William the Conqueror, its version of the *Chronicle* does not report the foundation of Battle Abbey. In the twelfth-century *Chronicon Monasteri de Bello*, William the Conqueror is reported to have made a vow to erect an abbey for the salvation of the souls of those who had fought and lost their lives in the Battle of Hastings. It is impossible to determine whether, at its foundation, the Abbey was really provided with the list of the names of those who took part in the battle; however, by the early fourteenth century several such lists of Norman names circulated widely.[12] If an original list had ever existed, by the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was created, it must have undergone several interpolations, as all the benefactors of the Abbey had been awarded a place on the list.[13] Furthermore, any scribe copying this roll outside the Abbey might have been willing to add his patron's name to it. For instance, some names, such as Mounthermer, Chauvent, and De La Pole, appear to belong to aristocratic families who became prominent only at the end of the thirteenth century, during Edward I's reign. However, considering the popularity that these rolls enjoyed at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Auchinleck redactor's omitting the foundation of the Abbey might have stemmed from the desire to dismiss the Norman conquest in as few lines as

[11] 'Harold, not content with the commander's task of urging others on, vigorously performed the duty of a soldier. Often he would strike an enemy who came within range, so that no one could approach unscathed, but horse and rider were at once laid low with a single stroke; and hence, as I said, it was a 'death-dealing shaft' from a distance that gave him the mortal wound. One of the knights hacked at his thigh with a sword as he lay on the ground; for which he was branded with disgrace by William for a dastardly and shameful act and degraded from his knighthood.' William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, pp. 454-7. In Robert of Gloucester's account, 'So þat harald þoru þen eie · issote was deþes wounde |& a kniȝt þat isei · þat he was to deþe ibroȝt | & smot him as he lay bineþe · & slou him as uor noȝt' (ll. 7483-5) Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester* vol 2, edited by William Aldis Wright, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887, p. 540.

[12] H. M. Smyser, 'The List of Norman Names in the Auchinleck MS. (Battle Abbey Roll)', in *Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Jeremiah Denis Matthias Ford*, edited by Urban T. Holmes Jr., Alex. J. Denomy, Jeremiah Matthias Ford, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948, p. 262. 'Unde et nunc de ejus auxilio securus, ad vestras qui mei gratia hoc initis certamen corroborandas manus ac mentes, votum facio, me in hoc certaminis loco pro salute cunctorum, et hic nominatim occumbentium, ad honorem Dei et sanctorum ejus quo servi Dei adjuventur, congruum cum digna libertate fundaturum monasterium, quod ita ut mihi conquirere potero lib[er . . o]blatum universis propitiabile fiat asilum.' *Chronicon Monasteri de Bello*, London: Impensis Societatis, 1846, pp. 3-4. 'Therefore, now reassured of his help, so that your bodies and minds may be reinvigorated I swear to those who by my grace have entered this war, that in this very spot where the battle took place for the salvation of all, and in the name of those who were slain, in honour of God and of his saints, by whom God's servants are assisted; a monastery worthy of freedom will be founded, so that, as I shall ascertain, a sanctuary may be freely offered to all.' (My translation)

[13] Smyser, 'The List of Norman Names', p. 269.

possible, as though it were a tragic disruption in the otherwise glorious history of England. The absence of any mention of the Battle Abbey in the *Chronicle* might also give rise to the possibility that what is now believed to be the *Battle Abbey Roll* might in fact have been conceived as something other than the list reporting the names of the Norman barons who fought on William the Conqueror's side.

The simultaneous presence of King Arthur and Guy of Warwick in the Auchinleck *Chronicle* not only emphasises their perceived historicity,[14] but also their sharing a common trait: they are both depicted as champions of Christianity. Standard Arthurian romances do not usually deal with the theme of Crusades and yet, in *Of Arthour and of Merlin,* Saxons are replaced with Saracens and the heroes of the Round Table as well as their King are transformed into crusaders, thus drawing a direct parallel with other texts from the collection, such as *King Richard, Roland and Vernagu* and *Otuel a Kniȝt*.[15] No Crusades were reported in the fourteenth century; nonetheless, this theme must still have been perceived as one of the utmost importance, since all English kings from Henry II to Edward III formally committed themselves to bringing the Holy Land back to Christianity.[16] At the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was created, the negotiations between Philip VI and Edward III on a last crusade reuniting all the kings of the West were at their height.[17] Therefore, it comes as no surprise that, in the Auchinleck *Chronicle* amongst the post-Conquest kings, great prominence is given to King Richard I and the account of his deeds during the Third Crusade. His ten-year-long reign is in fact reduced to the sole episode of the siege of Acre.

> & seþþe regned king Richard;
> For soþe, as ich vnderstond,
> He wan Acres into his hond,
> & ichil ȝou tel in what maner.
> Listeneþ al þat ben here. (ll. 2038-42)

[14] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p. 112.
[15] Siobhain Bly Calkin, 'Violence, Saracens, and English Identity in Of Arthour and of Merlin', *Arthuriana* 14 (2004), p. 18.
[16] Calkin, 'Violence, Saracens, and English Identity', p. 24.
[17] By 1334, the negotiations for a new Crusade had definitely collapsed and each king held the other responsible for having prevented the rescue of the Holy Land. Ormrod, *Edward III*, pp. 181-3.

Towards the end of the *Chronicle*, the author also claims that had Edward I lived enough to set sail again for the Holy Land, he would have certainly won it back to Christianity.

> He wald haue won more þan so
> ȝif he miȝt haue hadde liif þerto.
> Y no can telle ȝou wiþ no voice
> Hou lef him hadde ben to win þe croice
> Þat is in þe heþen lond.
> God sende it into Cristen hond. (ll. 2325-30)

Therefore, although King Edward I never set foot in Jerusalem as a king, his intention made him a champion of Christianity all the same.[18]

Furthermore, not only does the redactor of the Auchinleck version expand the section reporting Edward I's successful campaigns in Scotland, but he also emphasises that the King succeeded in conquering the whole of Albion. The greatest kings of England thus seem to be depicted as conquerors who also managed to rule over Scotland and Wales. Therefore, Brutus, Hengist and King Edward I all share the same greatness as they ruled over a united Britain. Although Edward I rooted his claim to sovereignty over Scotland in his descent from King Arthur, the King of the Round Table appears to be excluded from this line of illustrious native kings, as though he could hardly be given an entirely English pedigree.[19] After all, Arthur is described as a Welsh leader summoned by the English barons in order to obliterate Fortigern's tyrannical realm. Thus, the Auchinleck *Chronicle* seems to trace a line of greatness connecting unambiguously English rulers: Brutus, Hengist, and King Edward I.[20] The exclusion of Arthur might somehow come as no surprise, as at the turn of the fourteenth century

[18] This statement might have been inspired by Edward I's wish that upon his death his heart be taken on Crusade. Geraldine Heng, 'Jews, Saracens, "Black Men" and Tartars: England in a World of Racial Difference', in *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture, c.1350 – c.1500*, edited by Peter Brown, Oxford: Blackwell, 2008, p. 248. As a prince, Edward I distinguished himself as a crusader. Michael Prestwich, *Edward I*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 66-85.

[19] In terms of illustrious ancestors, Ranulph Higden, in his fourteenth-century world history, appears to associate Arthur with the Bretons and King Richard with the English. 'Sed fortassis mos est cuique nationi aliquem de suis laudibus attollere excessivis, ut quemadmodum Graeci suum Alexandrum, Romani suum Octavianum, Angli suum Ricardum, Franci suum Karolum, sic Britones suum Arthurum praeconantur.' [But on cas it is þe manere of everiche nacioun to overe preyse so moon of þe same nacioun, as þe Grees preyseþ here Alisaundre, and þe Romayns here Octavianus, and Englisshe men here Richard, and Frensche men here Charles, and Britouns here Arthur. (John Trevisa's translation)] *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis: Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century,* vol 5, edited by Churchill Babington and J. Rawson Lumby, London: Longman, 1865, pp. 336-7.

[20] However, Hengist as well is described as a foreign conqueror, though his provenance is not disclosed, 'After þat, wiþ gret vigour, | Into þis lond come a conquerour, | Hingist, þe strong king, | Wele doinde in al þing' (ll. 655-8).

the legendary king's connection with England appears to have been a burning topic. Some thirty years before the creation of the Auchinleck Manuscript, the reputed ancestry on which Edward I grounded his claim to suzerainty over Scotland had been legally challenged. In 1301, the Scottish lawyer Baldred Bisset, in charge of undermining Edward I's pretensions, demonstrated that the contemporary English King could claim no connection with the legendary King Arthur (and Brutus at the same time) as the Celts were destroyed by the Saxons and the Saxons by the Normans in turn.

> Preterea, tunc temporis omnes incole regni Anglie fuerunt Britones, qui dejecti erant postmodum per Saxones, Saxones per Dacos, et iterum Daci per Saxones et ipsi Saxones per Normannos, scilicet per Willelmum Bastard et suos complices, a quibus (non a Britonibus) iste rex dinoscitur descendisse.[21]

Furthermore, the legend according to which King Arthur would return to free the Celtic populations in need constituted a powerful instrument in the hands of the Welsh leaders. The legendary king's return was repeatedly used to support the Welsh kings' campaigns for their country's independence. Once again, Edward I managed to turn the situation to his own advantage: he staged the re-burying of Arthur's earthly remains in a new sumptuous shrine only to demonstrate that the legendary king was undoubtedly dead and that Arthur's formidable qualities had been all transfused into him by the mere touch of his body.[22] In this chapter, the material covered by the *Chronicle* will be investigated starting with the possible allusions to contemporary events scattered throughout the narrative. This analysis will be supplemented with material derived from the other historical texts from the Auchinleck collection. The subsequent sections will be devoted to the analysis of the additions that the Auchinleck redactor made to his source texts and will follow a roughly chronological order: first the accounts reporting the foundation of Albion and the etymology of its different names, then those of the realms of pre-Saxon kings and finally of the realms of Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings.

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[21] 'Besides, at that time all the inhabitants of the kingdom of England were Britons, who were afterwards overthrown by the Saxons, the Saxons by the Danes, and again the Danes by the Saxons, and the Saxons themselves by the Normans, that is by William the Bastard and his Adherents, from whom (not from the Britons) this king is known to have descended.' Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon,* vol. 6, edited by Norma F. Shead, Wendy B. Stevenson, Der Watt, Alan Borthwick, R.E. Latham, J. R. Phillips, and Martin Smith, Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 2004, pp. 182-3; Christopher Michael Berard, *Arthurianism in Early Plantagenet England: From Henry II to Edward I*, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2019, p. 289. However, the Auchinleck redactor of *Of Arthour & of Merlin* seems to see the English history in a different light, as the extensive use of the possessive 'our' throughout the romance might imply that the Celts were in fact perceived as their true ancestors. This aspect will be further explored in Chapter 4.1.

[22] Berard, *Arthurianism in Early Plantagenet England*, p. 233. This aspect will be further explored in Chapter 4.1.

2.1 History in Context: Contemporary Events and Preoccupations

The Auchinleck Manuscript proves an invaluable source of evidence to reconstruct the English historical and political background at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Its date of composition is thus entirely relevant to determine whether this manuscript was conceived to promote a sense of national identity in the wake of the wars of Scottish independence or of the early stages of the Hundred Years' War. On palaeographical grounds, this collection is believed to have been compiled sometime between 1330 and 1340,[23] probably in the London area. However, textual evidence might allow the determination of a narrower range of possible dates of composition. The manuscript appears to date back to the early years of Edward III's reign, since, in *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* the redactor not only reports Edward II's death, which took place in 1327, 'At Berkele dyed þe king, | At Glowcester is his biriing' (ll. 2346-7), but possibly also refers to the coup d'état that marked the real beginning of Edward III's reign.[24] When reporting Lancelot's affair with Guinevere, this redactor transforms the *Joyeuse Garde* into Nottingham Castle, the fortress in which Edward III's mother, Isabella, and her lover, Roger Mortimer, were captured in October 1330, 'Lancelot was a queynt man, | For þe quen sake he made Notingham' (ll. 1079-80).[25] Assuming that the reference to Nottingham Castle was really intended to evoke the seizure of Isabella and Mortimer, it might be used to establish a *terminus a quo,* which lies in the early years of Edward III's reign.

Immediately after having taken control of his reign, Edward III demonstrated the extent to which he had refined the features of his public persona: magnanimity in triumph and fierce single-mindedness in vengeance.[26] His coronation was followed by sumptuous celebrations and spectacular tournaments aimed at creating his image of greatness, in which extravagance and martialism were indissolubly intermingled. In Ormrod's words, 'it was in the early years of his reign that Edward turned his personal style into a political art and created the public image that would sustain his

[23] Derek Pearsall, 'The Auchinleck Manuscript Forty Years On', p. 13.
[24] Maurice Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages,* Abingdon: Routledge, 2005, p. 61.
[25] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 111.
[26] Ormrod, *Edward III,* p. 95.

monarchy over the following two generations.'[27] Edward III's machinery of political propaganda was merely set in motion during these early years in order to be fully exploited during the wars for Scottish independence and the Hundred Years' War. Edward III's sense of the greatness of his destiny was reinforced not only by his military success, which was interpreted as a sign of divine support, but also by several political prophecies envisaging his glorious fate.[28] However, his political propaganda was not only rooted in a strong sense of his own majesty and in a quasi-religious cult of his own persona, but also in the celebration of the English national identity. Everything related to the English language and history was masterly revitalised to support his cause. The legendary King Arthur was revived in his own person as well as in the establishment of the Order of the Garter,[29] whereas the myth that the French had wished to wipe out the English language – firstly used by his grandfather in 1295 – was repeatedly alluded to during the Hundred Years' War.[30]

Nonetheless, the lines devoted to Edward III in the Auchinleck *Chronicle* are not addressed to the Arthur-like figure that would grasp the palm of victory on the battlefields of Scotland and France only a few years later, but rather to a young king who still needed to be granted 'miȝt & grace' (l. 2356) in order to defeat his enemies. However young Edward III might have been at that point, he was certainly not the same inexperienced teenage king who broke up in tears at discovering that the Scots had just vanished instead of fighting on the banks of the river Wear, during the Weardale campaign of 1327.[31] He had rather become the cunning manoeuvrer who had just destroyed his enemy, Roger Mortimer, and marginalised his mother, Isabella.

Now Ihesu Crist & seyin Richard
Saue þe ȝong king Edward
& ȝif him grace his lond to ȝeme

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[27] Ormrod, *Edward III,* p. 97.
[28] Ormrod, *Edward III,* pp. 99-100.
[29] Ormrod, *Edward III,* p. 98.
[30] Prestwich, *The Three Edwards*, p. 187.
[31] Clifford J. Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III 1327-1360,* Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000, p. 23; 'Le roy, un innocent, plora dez oils, qi se delogea et se retray deuers Euerwyk, qi plus ne se entremist de cel guere dorant la gouernail qil auoit de sa mere et del auaunt dit Roger de Mortimer, count de la March.' Sir Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica: A Chronicle from A.D. 1066 to A.D. 1362*, edited by Joseph Stevenson, Edinburgh: Maitland Club, 1836, p. 155; 'The king, a mere boy, burst into tears, he broke up and retired towards York, engaging no more in this war so long as he was under governance of his mother and of the aforesaid Roger de Mortimer, Earl of March.', Sir Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica: The Reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III*, translated by Sir Herbert Maxwell, Glasgow: James MacLehouse, 1917, p. 81.

Þat it be Ihesu Crist to queme
& leue him so for to wirche
Þurth þe lore of holi chirche
Þat God þermid apaied be
Þer he sett in his trinite;
& ȝif him miȝt & grace
Him to venge in eueriche place
Oȝaines his enemis wiche þat it be.
God it him graunt par charite
Þurth his hates þat be ten.
Say we now alle amen. (ll. 2348-61)

Further reference to almost contemporary events might also be found in other texts in this collection, namely *The Saying of the Four Philosophers* and *The Simonie*. *The Saying of the Four Philosophers* is a political song in two parts. The first is made of twenty-four macaronic lines certainly inspired by *De Provisione Oxonie* (Cambridge, St John's College E.9 112), a political song written during Edward I's reign, complaining about his revocation of the clauses added to Magna Carta.[32] In 1297, Edward I was in fact urged by the barons to confirm the charters of 1225. However, since they insisted on new additions to the original charter, the King negotiated the issuance of a separate document over fear that any revision of the original could hardly be removed without facing a rebellion. Only a few years later, in 1305, this choice proved to be a successful move, as a papal bull allowed King Edward I to go back on his word and revoke the additional clauses. Nonetheless, the title *De Provisione Oxonie* refers to another attempt to curb the king's power.

In 1258, a group of barons led by Simon de Montfort issued the Provisions of Oxford, a constitutional reform consisting in the institution of a group of nobles who could rule the country in the king's name. The Provisions imposed a council of fifteen members chosen amongst twenty-four candidates partly chosen by the king himself and partly by the reformers. This council of fifteen was appointed to advise the king on all relevant matters. They also imposed the holding of three parliaments every year. Since this council could not only interfere with the appointment of ministers, but also with the distribution of patronage, and the direction of policy, King Henry III could not tolerate such a debasement of his executive power.[33] He first refused to participate in the 1259

[32] V. J. Scattergood, 'Political Context, Date and Composition of the *Saying of the Four Philosophers*', *Medium Ævum,* 37 (1968), p. 157.
[33] D. A. Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III*, Norfolk: The Hambledon Press, 1996, p. 220.

parliament set by the barons over the excuse that he was in France. Only a few months later, he returned to England at the head of an army of mercenaries with the clear intention of obliterating Montfort's cause. By 1261, all the rebellious barons except Montfort had accepted the king's overturn of the Provisions. Montfort was thus forced to flee to France for safety.[34] Nonetheless, Montfort was a man of action and was strongly convinced that change could only be enforced by might. Therefore, by 1264 he had gathered an army capable of confronting the King's. In May 1264, Montfort's army succeeded in routing the King's at Lewes. This striking victory marked the highest point in Montfort's political and military career, as he subsequently ruled the country in the king's name.[35] However, only a year later, his army was destroyed by the king's and he was brutally slain alongside his supporters at Evesham. Shortly after his death, the rebellious baron started to be venerated as a saint;[36] therefore, it might come as no surprise that in London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian A VI, Simon de Montfort is hailed as the patron of the people of England, 'Protector Gentis Angliae', and is reported to have performed several miracles.[37] Although very brief, the mention of Simon de Montfort in the Auchinleck *Chronicle* is highly significant, as it evokes the baron party's constant struggle to curb the otherwise unrestrained royal power.

> Þurth fals conseyl & wicked red
> Simond Mufort was brout to ded,
> For he wald haue þe gode lawe,
> Þerfore he was brouȝt o liue dawe. (ll. 2297-300)

The Auchinleck redactor's viewpoint seems clear: Montfort paid with his life his desire to enforce rightful laws, 'gode lawe', on the country. However, Montfort's struggle to control the King's power was not a dead letter, as it resulted in the addition to Edward II's coronation oath of a clause binding the king to the observation of the rightful laws chosen by his subjects.[38]

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[34] Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III*, p. 221.
[35] Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III*, p. 294.
[36] David Matthews, *Writing to the King: Nation, Kingship and Literature in England 1250-1350,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 29.
[37] Matthews, *Writing to the King*, p. 49; Claire Valente, 'Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, and the Utility of Sanctity in Thirteenth-Century England', *Journal of Medieval History*, 21 (1995), pp. 30-1.
[38] Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages,* p. 39.

> Sire, graunte vous a tenir et garder les leys et les custumes droitureles les quiels la communate de votre roiaume aura esleu, et les defendrez et afforcerez al honour de Dieu, a vostre poer?[39]

As stressed by Scattergood, the redactor of the Auchinleck version reworked his source and brought it up to date, by reporting Edward II's breach of the Ordinances issued in 1311. Although in October 1311, the King had agreed to all the forty-one articles presented by the Lords Ordainers, the struggle between the baron party, led by Thomas of Lancaster, and the King over the enforcement of the Ordinances lasted for more than a decade. In 1322, at the death of Thomas of Lancaster, the Ordinances were finally declared void.[40]

> At Westminster after þe feire
> maden a gret parlement.
> *La chartre fet de cyre –*
> *ieo l'enteink & bien le crey –*
> It was holde to neih þe fire
> And is molten al awey. (ll. 7-12)

The first part of *The Saying of the Four Philosophers* appears quite topical, since the allusion to the parliament summoned after the fair of St. Bartholomew at Smithfield might be a reference to the 'gret parlement' that lasted from August to October 1311.[41] Therefore, one might argue that, although updated, the poem still refers to events that took place some twenty years earlier. Nonetheless, the breach of the Ordinances must still have been perceived as a burning topic, since, after his coronation, Edward III magnanimously responded to the requests of all those who had supported his mother and Mortimer's cause, but stubbornly refused to reinstate the Ordinances of 1311.[42] This might come as no surprise if one considers that the ninth article of the Ordinances compels the king to obtain baronial and parliamentary consent in order to wage war.

> 9. Purceo qe le roi ne doit emprendre fait de guerre countre nuly, ne alier hors de son roiaume, saunz commun assent de son barnage, pur moultz des perils qe purront avenir a lui et a son roiaume, nous ordeinoms qe le roi desoremes ne aile hors de son roiaume, nenprenge countre nuly fait de guerre, saunz commun assent de son barnage, et ceo en parlement. Et si autrement le face, et si sur cele emprise face somoundre son servise, soit la somonse pur nule, et sil aviegne qe le roi empreigne fait

[39] *Selected Documents of English Constitutional History 1307-1485,* edited by S. B. Chrimes and A. L. Brown, London: Adam & Charles Black, 1961, p. 5. 'Sire, do you commit yourself to observe the just laws and the customs that the community of your realm shall have chosen and defend them, in the name of God, at your own peril?' (My translation).

[40] Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages,* p. 55.

[41] Scattergood, 'Political Context', p. 161.

[42] Ormrod, *Edward III,* p. 59.

> de guerre countre nuly, ou aille hors de terre, par assent de son dit barnage, et bosoigne qil mette gardein en son roiaume, dunt le mette par commun assent de son barnage, et ceo en parlement.[43]

The second part of the poem is made of Middle English lines based on the popular story of 'The Saying of the Four Philosophers', contained in the *Gesta Romanorum* (London, British Library, MS Additional 9066).[44] This part appears so vague that it could be used whatever the circumstances. The first philosopher argues that no king can prosper unless he can counsel himself. If on the one hand these lines might allude to Edward II's favourites, on the other, they might be a bitter comment on the new regime. In the first years of his reign, Edward III appeared to have very limited powers, a mere puppet in the hands of Isabella and Mortimer.

> Ne may no king wel ben in londe,
> Vnder God almihte,
> But he kunne himself rede (ll. 22-4)

These verses also seem to echo the text of the Ordinance whereby Piers Gaveston was exiled from the country. According to the chronicler of the *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, the King's favourite was accused of having taken advantage of Edward II's poor judgement.

> Petrus de Gauestone dominum regem male duxit, domino regi male consuluit et ipsum ad male faciendum deceptorie et multiformiter induxit.[45]

However, the prophetic tone used by the philosophers transforms this single event into a general truth; therefore, the line 'For miht is riht' (l. 27) could refer either to the oppressing control that Edward II's favourites had exerted on the country, or to Roger Mortimer's own reckless management of public affairs, whereas the line 'For fiht is fliht, þe lond is nameles' (l. 32) could easily be related either to Edward II's disastrous military campaigns or to the 'Shameful Peace' signed in 1328.[46] Other possible

[43] '9. Given the many dangers in which the king and his kingdom may incur, we henceforth ordain that the king shall never go out of his kingdom nor wage war against anyone without the common consent of his barons and of his parliament. And if he does it all the same, and if he summons [his subjects] to his service, the summon shall be invalid, and if the king happens to wage war or go out of his realm with the consent of his barons, it is necessary that he proclaims a steward in his reign with the consent of his barons and of his parliament.' (My translation) *Selected Documents of English Constitutional History 1307-1485,* p. 13.

[44] Laura Kendrick, 'On Reading Medieval Political Verse: Two Partisan Poems from the Reign of Edward II', *Mediaevalia,* 5 (1979), p. 191.

[45] 'Piers Gaveston has led the king astray, advised the lord king badly, and persuaded him deceitfully and in many ways to do wrong.' *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, edited and translated by Wendy R. Childs, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005, pp. 34-5.

[46] Ormrod, *Edward III,* p. 72.

references to contemporary events might be detected in the lines lamenting moral corruption, 'For lust haþ leue, þe lond is þeweles'(l. 54). Isabella's adulterous and treacherous affair with Mortimer had allowed lust to impose its dominion over the country. All this evil could not but result in the civil war that tore the country and provoked the spilling of noble English blood.

For wille is red, þe lond is wrecful;
For wit is qued, þe lond is wrongful;
For god is ded, þe lond is sinful. (ll. 66-8)

The last extant poem from the Auchinleck Manuscript, *Þe Simonie,* can be ascribed to the genre of the estate satire, since the greed of the clergy and the pride of the aristocracy are deemed to be the causes of the country's ruin. The unmistakable sign of divine retribution would be the Great Famine that uninterruptedly afflicted the country from 1315 to 1317, 'hungger and derthe' (l. 2). This plague was certainly sent by God to punish the country for all its wrongdoing.[47] Instead of fighting in the Holy Land, knights and barons had turned their swords against one another; thus the country is torn by civil war. Although the King appears to be misguided by favourites, the fault for England's ruin is entirely his. This point is further explored in the Auchinleck *Chronicle*, where Edward II's reign is described as ruled by 'wicked conseyle'. The King might not be wicked in himself, but rather weak and incapable of ruling the country on his own. He thus proves to be completely dependent on Hugh Despenser's evil counsel.

He les his lond, saun faile,
Þurth his wicked conseyle,
Þurth sir Howe þe Spenser,
Þat was his wicked conseyller. (ll. 2340-3)

The preoccupation with the enforcement of the Ordinances and the influence of the King's favourites might also be detected in the reference to the civil war that culminated in the death of Thomas of Lancaster, 'Þat þe beste blod of (of) þe lond shamliche was brouht to grounde' (l. 435). The King's cousin was the leader of the barons who waged war against Edward II on the grounds of his breaking of the Ordinances, as well as on his reluctance to stop Despenser's savage enrichment.

[47] 'Medieval English Political Writings', edited by James M. Dean, *TEAMS: Middle English Texts Series*, https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/dean-medieval-english-political-writings-poems-against-simony-and-the-abuse-of-money-introduction [accessed on 03/05/2021]

Although Thomas of Lancaster was summarily tried and executed on 22 March 1322,[48] his death must still have been perceived as extremely relevant at the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was created, as the first act of Edward III's parliament was to reverse the judgement against him and to restore his title and property to his brother. Furthermore, the crown immediately started the negotiations with the papacy in order to transform Thomas of Lancaster into a political saint, martyrised at the cause of his own country's liberty.[49] The judgement against Despenser was conversely confirmed.[50] However, since Roger Mortimer recklessly took advantage of the redistribution of Despenser's estates,[51] the author of *þe Simonie* seems to suggest that very little had changed since the Queen's lover came to power and England is still 'shent þurw falsnesse and þurw pride' (l. 455).

The many references to recent events might be used not only to set the range of dates in which the manuscript was created, but also to gain some insight into the identity of the intended audience. The marked interest not only in England's remote and legendary past, but also in contemporary events might mirror the baronial preoccupations involving the idea of kingship, the extent of the king's powers, and the role of the law as an instrument of justice.[52] Susan Crane has argued that since the English aristocracy had undergone several crises and much political turmoil over the previous three centuries, the romances belonging to the Matter of England prove to resist any association with specific families or events. They should thus be considered as representative of 'pervasive qualities of English feudalism'.[53] Consequently, the Auchinleck Manuscript might well have been designed to celebrate the ancestry of a specific unidentified family, but it might also have been conceived as a general reflection on the complex political and social situation in England at the beginning of the

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[48] Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 55-7.
[49] Ormrod, *Edward III,* p. 57. For further discussion on the cult of Thomas of Lancaster and its political implications, see Danna Piroyanski, *Martyrs in the Making: Political Martyrdom in Late Medieval England*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 23-48.
[50] Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 61.
[51] Ormrod, *Edward III,* pp. 57-8.
[52] Crane, *Insular Romance Politics, Faith and Culture*, p. 67.
[53] Crane, *Insular Romance Politics, Faith and Culture*, pp. 17-8.

fourteenth century. The interest in all things English is apparent not only in the repeated references to current events, but also in the construction of shared historical roots.[54] *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* might thus have been designed as a source of historical knowledge aimed at creating a national heritage of greatness capable of instilling in the audience a sense of belonging to a glorious and ancient country.

2.2 Re-inventing History: Founding Figures

The first major difference between the Auchinleck version and any other redaction of the *Liber Regum Angliae* is the addition of the Albina story. All other versions of the chronicle directly begin with Brutus' arrival on an almost uninhabited isle called Albion, which proves to be the dwelling place of what remained of a once thriving community of giants. The Auchinleck redactor seems to be interested in providing the most complete version of the foundation of the country and thus adds a plausible explanation not only for the name Albion, but also for the existence of giants at the time Brutus reached the isle. In his seminal chronicle *Historia Regum Britanniae,* the twelfth-century historian Geoffrey of Monmouth claims that according to a very ancient authoritative source, 'liber uetustissimus',[55] the isle was previously inhabited by a few giants, which were immediately destroyed by Brutus and his companions, 'Erat tunc nomen insulae Albion; quae a nemine, exceptis paucis gigantibus, inhabitabatur.'[56] No further explanation for either the existence of giants, or the name Albion is provided. This vagueness about the pristine state of the isle seems to reverberate in all the

[54] As stressed by Raluca Radulescu the chronicles recording the history of England from its mythical foundation to more recent events were conceived to help 'their readers to reflect upon their sense of belonging to the nation and to memorize the most important events in their history.' Raluca L. Radulescu, 'Writing Nation: Shaping Identity in Medieval Historical Narratives', in *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture, c.1350 – c.1500*, edited by Peter Brown, Oxford: Blackwell, 2008, p. 363.

[55] 'Talia michi et de talibus multociens cogitanti optulit Walterus Oxenefordensis archidiaconus, uir in oratoria arte atque in exoticis hystoriis eruditus, quondam Britannici sermonis librum uetustissumum qui a Bruto primo rege Britonum usque ad Cadualandrum filium Caduallonis actus omnium continere et ex ordine perpulcris orationibus proponebat.' (PROLOGVS.7-12) 'I frequently thought the matter over in this way until Walter archdeacon of Oxford, a man skilled in the rhetorical arts and in foreign histories, brought me a very old book in the British tongue, which set out in excellent style a continuous narrative of all their deeds from the first king of the Britons, Brutus, down to Cadualadrus, son of Caduallo.' Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, edited by Michael D. Reeve and translated by Neil Wright, Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2007, pp. 4-5.

[56] 'The island was at that time called Albion; it had no inhabitants save for a few giants.' Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 26-7.

redactions of the *Liber Regum Angliae,* except in that contained in the Auchinleck Manuscript. For instance, the redactor of the chronicle included in the roughly contemporary MS Royal 12 C XII supports his claim about the ancient name of the isle by providing an equally reliable and yet vague source, some 'philosofres'.

> Þis philosofres us doþ to wyte
> Ase we findeþ ywryte
> ¶ Þis lond wes cleped Albyon (*MS Royal 12 C XII*, ll. 5-7)

In that same version, the narrative quickly moves to the description of the wild state of the isle at Brutus' arrival.

> Ah al wes wode & wildernesse
> Nes þer no tilþe more ne lesse ·
> Geauntz her wonede swyþe stronge
> Þat were boþe grete & longe
> ¶ Geomagog hatte here kyng (*MS Royal 12 C XII*, ll. 19-23)

Therefore, the Albina story reported in the Auchinleck *Chronicle* does not appear to have been drawn from any other extant redaction of the *Liber Regum Angliae*, nor from any of its possible sources, namely the twelfth-century *Gesta Regum Anglorum* by William of Malmesbury and the thirteenth-century *Metrical Chronicles* by Robert of Gloucester. It seems rather to have been inspired by an anonymous poem known as *Des Grantz Geanz.*

Studies of the extant manuscripts containing either the Anglo-Norman version of *Des Grantz Geanz* or its translations into Middle English, Welsh, and Latin suggest that the myth of Albina might have originated at Glastonbury Abbey, which was also actively involved in disseminating the legend of King Arthur. Significantly, as both Albina and Arthur somehow appear to be related to the English claim to sovereignty over Scotland, Glastonbury Abbey might be considered a crucial supporter of the king's expansionist foreign policy.[57] The story of Albina became extremely popular as it was inserted as a preface to most redactions of the prose *Brut*. Its perceived plausibility appears to have

[57] As will be discussed later, the Scots answered to the English claim that Brutus' sons had ruled over England, Scotland, and Wales, by providing a more ancient founder for their own country, Scota. Therefore, Albina would have been created to move the foundation of England back in time, thus antedating the legend of Scota. Victor I. Scherb, 'Assimilating Giants: The Appropriation of Gog and Magog in Medieval and Early Modern England', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 32 (2002), p. 67; Matthew Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012, p. 147.

been reinforced not only by its being translated into Latin, a language inherently associated with the idea of authority, but also by its providing an explanation to previously unexplained aspects of the foundation myth: the presence of giants and the origin of the name Albion.[58]

The Albina story is preserved in two different redactions: the a-redaction, to which the Auchinleck version belongs, and the b-redaction, which functions as a prologue to the Long Version of the prose *Brut*. These two stories differ not only in the original dwelling place of Albina and her sisters – Greece for the a-redaction and Syria for the b-redaction – but also in terms of the outcome of Albina's betrayal: in the a-redaction the murder of Albina's and her sisters' husbands is prevented by the younger sister's revealing the murderous plot to her husband, whereas in the b-version the murder takes place.[59] However, the core of the story is unchanged: a very powerful king has a number of beautiful and proud daughters, who are given in marriage to loyal lords. The eldest daughter, Albina, succeeds in persuading her sisters to join her in killing their husbands, claiming that her husband was holding her captive. The reason why the other sisters agree to take part in the murder remains unclear; however, the youngest sister – whose name is not disclosed – reveals the plot to her husband. The king's daughters are tried, but instead of being executed for treason, they are consigned to a fate worse than death: they are set adrift in a boat with no oars. After having wandered for a long time in true despair, they land on an uninhabited island. Since the isle has no name, Albina decides to call it Albion after herself. Incubi visit Albina and her sisters and they beget a race of giants. The giants dwell in the country until Brutus annihilates what remains of them alongside their leader, Gogmagog.

The Auchinleck version appears to follow quite closely that presented in the roughly contemporary manuscript London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra D IX.[60] In that particular French redaction, *Des Grantz Geanz* does not function as a prologue to a version of the prose *Brut*;

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[58] James P. Carley, Julia Crick, 'Constructing Albion's Past: An Annotated Edition of *De Origine Gigantum*', *Arthurian Literature*, 13 (1995), p. 60; Anke Bernau, 'Beginning with Albina: Remembering the Nation', *Exemplaria*, 21 (2009), pp. 249-50.

[59] Tamar Drukker, 'Thirty-Three Murderous Sisters: A Pre-Trojan Foundation Myth in the Middle English Prose "Brut" Chronicle', *The Review of English Studies*, 54 (2003), pp. 454-5.

[60] *Des Grantz Geanz: An Anglo-Norman Poem,* edited by G. E. Brereton, Oxford: Blackwell, 1937, pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

nonetheless, it is followed by another chronicle, the *Chronicle of Lichfield Cathedral to AD 1387*.[61] The historical perspective of the text might be inferred not only from its being placed amongst other historical material, but also from the addition of a Latin incipit, which reads 'Incipit tractatus de terra Anglie, a quibus inhabitabatur in principio, ante adventum Bruti. Que terra primo vocabatur Albion et postea Bruto Britannia. Deinde Anglia nuncupate est.'[62] This *tractatus* seems to acknowledge a chronicle, possibly the *Brut*, as its source: 'Si cum la cronike counte | Deux centz e sessaunte amounte' (ll. 491-2).[63] The Auchinleck version as well seems to suggest a *Brut* chronicle as its source.[64]

> In grete hilles þai woned here
> & liued bi erbes & bi wilde dere;
> Milke & water þai dronk nouȝt elles,
> As þe Broutt ous siggeþ & telleþ. (ll. 379-82)

However, it might be worth considering the Albina story in the light of the political context in which it emerged. In the mid-twelfth century, another myth circulated in Scotland, that of Scota. The daughter of the Egyptian pharaoh, Scota, had been exiled alongside her husband, the Greek Gaythelos. Significantly, as stressed by Dauvit Broun, the first version of the legend had it that Scota and Gaythelos settled in Spain. Their descendants then migrated to Ireland. A mere handful of them continued their journey to Scotland. Therefore, the 'divinely ordained homeland of the *Scoti* was not Scotland, but Ireland'.[65] Although the story of Scota was used politically since the time of William the Lion's reign, when the genealogy of his dynasty was traced back to Scota's husband,[66] it was not until the turn of the fourteenth century that the myth was revisited. 'Baldred Bisset's "Pleading" of

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[61] The manuscript London, MS Cotton Cleopatra D IX also contains some documents referring to Fineshade Priory, the *Speculum Regis Edwardi Tertii*, the *Life of St John the Evangelist*, the *Life of Thomas Becket*, as well as some Psalter leaves.

[62] *Des Grantz Geanz: An Anglo-Norman Poem,* edited by G. E. Brereton, Oxford: Blackwell, 1937, p. 2. 'Here begins the treatise on the land of England, by whom it was inhabited at the beginning, before the coming of Brutus. How this land was at first called Albion, and afterwards Britannia after Brutus. Thereafter it has been called England.' (My translation); Lesley Johnson, 'Return to Albion', *Arthurian Literature*, 13 (1995), p. 30.

[63] *Des Grantz Geanz*, p. 26.

[64] Bernau, 'Beginning with Albina: Remembering the Nation', p. 257. The name 'Brut' is often used to refer not to a specific text, but rather to any chronicle of British history beginning with Brutus. *MED*, 'Brut' https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary [accessed on 15/08/2023]

[65] Dauvit Broun, 'The Birth of Scottish History', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 76 (1997), p. 11. Edward J. Cowan, 'Myth and Identity in Early Medieval Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 63 (1984), pp. 119-21.

[66] In 1249, at Alexander III's coronation, the king's genealogy was read aloud again, in order to celebrate Scotland's antiquity and independence. Carley, Crick, 'Constructing Albion's Past', pp. 55-6. Anke Bernau, 'Myths of Origin and the Struggle over Nationhood in Medieval and Early Modern England' in *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England,* edited by Gordon McMullan and David Matthews, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 109.

1301 contains the first extant Scottish account of Scottish origins to cast Scotland rather than Ireland as the Scottish homeland.'[67] In this later version, Scota founded a new country, which was named Scotland after herself. The country would henceforth be independent. These amendments might have been prompted by the need to offer a counternarrative to that provided by Edward I to support his claim of sovereignty over Scotland. The pretensions of the English king were grounded in the division of the country amongst Brutus' descendants, as recorded in the ancient chronicles. On his death, Brutus had the country divided into England, Scotland, and Wales, which were respectively assigned to each of his three sons: Locrinus, Albanactus and Kamber. The story of Brutus' sons appears to have been used for the first time for political purposes in 1301, when Edward I sent a letter to pope Boniface VIII declaring his legitimate supremacy over Scotland on the grounds of the overlordship of Locrinus, Brutus' eldest son, over his younger brothers: Albanactus and Kamber.[68] The story of Scota was thus revived by the Scottish side in order to outdo that of Brutus in terms of antiquity.[69]

The story of Brutus' offspring, narrated by Geoffrey of Monmouth, was a powerful one, since it provided England with an illustrious ancestor and reinforced the English claim to suzerainty over Scotland and Wales at the same time.[70] Furthermore, it somehow fostered the tradition of *translatio studii et imperii* by combining the victorious Greek with the exiled Trojan – Brutus' wife, Ignoge, was in fact Greek by birth.[71] England would thus have been awarded an authoritative and illustrious pedigree, encompassing both sides of the Trojan War. The Auchinleck *Chronicle* seems to adhere to

[67] Broun, 'The Birth of Scottish History', p. 13.
[68] Victoria Shirley, 'The Scottish Reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth', in *A Companion to Geoffrey of Monmouth*, Leiden: Brill, 2020, pp. 487-93; Carley, Crick, 'Constructing Albion's Past', pp. 55-6. Significantly, the story of Brutus seems to have undergone some reworking – especially regarding the degree of kinship of the main characters – before appearing in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. According to the eleventh-century Scottish poem *Duan Albanach* (Songs of the Scots), Brutus and Albanactus were in fact brothers (rather than father and son) and the former usurped the throne of the latter. Kate Ash-Irisarri, 'Scotland and Anglo-Scottish Border Writing', in *Medieval Historical Writing: Britain and Ireland, 500-1500*, edited by Jennifer Jahner, Emily Steiner, Elizabeth M. Tyler, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 228-9.
[69] Katherine Terrell, *Scripting the Nation: Court, Poetry and the Authority of History in Late Medieval Scotland*, Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 2021, p. 47. Johnson, 'Return to Albion', p. 25. 'In 1321 the Scots cited Scota during peace negotiations at Bamburgh, and the *Vita Edwardi I* relates that when the Scots demanded restoration of the Stone of Scone in 1324 they argued that Scota had brought the stone to Scotland long before the coming of Brutus to Albion.' Carley, Crick, 'Constructing Albion's Past', p. 59.
[70] Bernau, 'Myths of Origin and the Struggle over Nationhood in Medieval and Early Modern England', pp. 106-7.
[71] Johnson, 'Return to Albion', p. 19. In the Auchinleck redaction, Albina herself is the daughter of a Greek king.

the account provided in the *Historia Regum Britanniae,* as it reports that, after having conquered the whole island, Brutus divided it amongst his three sons. Nonetheless, this redactor takes the opportunity to emphasise that Brutus has sovereignty over the whole island, 'Al Brut wan to his hond | Inglond, Wales & Scotlond' (ll. 477-8). Significantly, this same sentence is repeated almost identically in order to describe the conquering policy of two other kings: Hengist and Edward I.

> Brut hadde þre sones,
> Þat wer swiþe fair gomes:
> Þeldest men cleped Lokerin,
> He regned after his fader fin;
> Camber hiȝt þat oþer,
> He was þe midel broþer,
> He was born in Deuenschire,
> Of al Wales Brut made him sire;
> Albanak þe þridde cleped wes,
> Scotlond to him he ches,
> Al Brut wan to his hond
> Inglond, Wales & Scotlond. (ll. 467-78)

This claim might be ascribed to the English political propaganda promoted first by Edward I and then by his grandson, Edward III. However, King Edward I grounded his pretension not only in Locrinus' overlordship over his younger brothers, but also in King Arthur's ruling over the whole isle. Therefore, had the Auchinleck *Chronicle* been exclusively inspired by Edward's propaganda, King Arthur should probably have enjoyed greater prominence in the text; on the contrary, he is certainly described as a conqueror, but his martial achievements somehow seem to have been downplayed. The Anglo-Scottish conflict might once again provide some valuable context to explain such a choice.

The Scots admitted that Arthur's story was true, but they also claimed that after Mordred's betrayal, Scotland had returned to its state of independence.[72] In 1320, the Scottish barons issued a document known as *The Declaration of Arbroath* in which they proclaimed that the independence of Scotland was of almost immemorial antiquity. Although the story of Scota is not directly mentioned in the *Declaration*, the document evokes a quasi-biblical account of an unconquered population forced to migrate from Greater Scythia to Scotland via Spain. Scottish independence might thus find support in a past as illustrious as that evoked by Brutus' myth.[73] Some fifty years later, John of Fordun

[72] Carley, Crick, 'Constructing Albion's Past', p. 58. This aspect will be further explored in Chapter 4.1.
[73] Carley, Crick, 'Constructing Albion's Past', pp. 42-3.

famously traced back the foundation of Scotland to the arrival of Scota and her husband. However, in his *Chronica Gentis Scotorum,* the Scottish historian hastens to clarify that the first king of Scotland was in fact Scota's husband, Gaythelos. Therefore, unlike Albina and her sisters, Scota never appears to have threatened the social order by challenging her husband's authority.[74] Furthermore, since the Albina story appears to have originated in those same years in which the wars of Scottish independence were raging, it might have been conceived as a direct answer to that of Scota.[75] By the time the Auchinleck *Chronicle* was allegedly copied, Edward III might in fact have just withdrawn the Shameful Peace, signed only a few years earlier, and was about to wage a full-scale war on the Scottish borders.[76]

Considering that the *Chronicle* consists of around 2300 lines in all and that the Albina story is around 350 lines long, the Auchinleck redactor appears to have wanted to give it great prominence.[77] The importance of the Albina story might lie in its being strongly connected to the country's collective memory, as her act of naming the uninhabited isle after herself guarantees not only the narratability of the story and its consequent commemoration, but also the emergence of a sense of national identity.[78] No unnamed country can in fact be proudly called home. However, there seem to be two competing foundation myths, as both Albina and Brutus could claim that same role. In this respect, Edward Said makes a crucial distinction between beginning and origin.[79] The former would be an act of historical understanding associated with an authoritative founding figure and characterised by deliberate action, whereas the accidental nature of the latter would imply mere passivity. Brutus can easily be associated with beginning as he certainly has authority and acts by will, whereas Albina's

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[74] Johannis de Fordun, *Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, vol 1, edited by William F. Skene, Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871, Chapter 1.8, pp. 6-7.
[75] Terrell, *Scripting the Nation,* p. 98; 'As we have already established, it was in this same decade that our translation of *Des Grantz Geanz* came into being: manuscript evidence indicates that it must have been written between the early 1330s when the abbreviated redaction of *Des Granz Geanz* was composed and before c. 1340 when the Great Cartulary of Glastonbury […] was drawn up.' Carley, Crick, p. 62.
[76] Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, pp. 62-3.
[77] The Albina story occupies double the lines devoted to King Richard, certainly far many more than those devoted to King Arthur (70 lines) and even more than those devoted to the legendary King Hengist (221 lines).
[78] Bernau, 'Beginning with Albina: Remembering the Nation', p. 254.
[79] Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, London: Granta, 1997, p. 6.

inscription in either category appears more problematic. At first sight, her story would seem to belong to the second group, as she is left adrift alongside her sisters and reaches England by mere chance. However, as far as authority is concerned, her being daughter to a Greek king somehow makes her an authoritative founder. In terms of agency, one should consider that her exile is provoked by a chain of events set in motion by her treasonous plot to kill her husband as well as those of her sisters. Furthermore, since that uninhabited land formally begins to exist as a country only after she names it Albion, her story can hardly be considered exclusively driven by chance.[80] Therefore, England appears to be characterised by two beginnings not dissimilar in theoretical terms, though different in outcome.

The Albina story appears to be as powerful as Brutus', since by still retaining some traits of fatalism, it somehow results in being a combination of fate and agency. Brutus' agency stretches well beyond the mere foundation of a country, as it involves a process of civilisation passing through the construction of roads and cities. Almost all the kings mentioned in the *Chronicle* are reported to have founded cities or have contributed to the development of a civilised country; conversely, Albina is responsible for none of this.[81] After having given the land a name, she plays no further role in history, except that of giving birth to a race of giants. Nothing is said about her death, as if her part in English history had already been over. As argued by Anke Bernau, since upon Brutus' arrival the country was mere wilderness, Brutus' building cities represents a first act of civilisation. However, Brutus' civilising activity appears to have stopped to the Borders, as he built no cities in Scotland. Therefore, the Albina-Brutus double myth seems masterly designed to outdo Scota's not only in terms of the antiquity of the country's foundation, but also of its civilisation. Furthermore, another legendary English king is evoked in order to debase the Scottish illustrious pedigree: King Hengist is in fact assigned the role of the civiliser, the king who first transformed the savage Scotland into a civilised land punctuated with cities.[82]

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[80] Bernau, 'Beginning with Albina: Remembering the Nation', pp. 260-1.
[81] Bernau, 'Beginning with Albina: Remembering the Nation', p. 264.
[82] Bernau, 'Myths of Origin and the Struggle over Nationhood in Medieval and Early Modern England', pp. 112-3.

As mentioned before, myths retain an indispensable function in the creation of national identity, as they foster a sense of pride for an illustrious ancestry. However, they can be exploited in terms of political ideology only in so far as they demonstrate some kind of authority.[83] According to Reynolds, foundation myths can fall into three major categories depending on their source of authority. The first concerns the myth describing all German populations as deriving from the three sons of Mannus, the son of Earth. This myth was at the heart of the creation of the 'Frankish Table of People'. In the Middle Ages, those tables were considered an authoritative means to explain the relationship between different populations. Other myths exploit biblical references. For instance, according to Isidore of Seville medieval European peoples in general would descend from Japheth, Noah's son, whereas the Goths would specifically descend from Magog, Noah's grandson. The third type conversely grounds its authority in classical antiquity, by being an instance of the tradition of the *translatio studii et imperii*. At first sight, the Albina story seems to fall into none of these categories. However, since Albina and her sisters are the daughters of an illustrious Greek king, their story could be considered as grounded in classical antiquity. The story of Scota similarly derives its authority from the combination of classical Greece with biblical Egypt, as Scota is the daughter of the Egyptian pharaoh, whereas her husband is a Greek prince.[84]

As for biblical resonances, one might argue that the biblical story of humankind is characterised by two beginnings, one with Adam and Eve and the other after the Flood. The history of England would be similarly characterised by a first act of foundation by Albina and by a subsequent new beginning triggered by Brutus' arrival.[85] Nonetheless, since giants are exterminated by Brutus – like the first inhabitants of the earth by the Flood – English people cannot be considered descendants of Albina's offspring, but rather Brutus'. Furthermore, the choice of the name of the giants' leader, Gogmagog, can hardly be accidental, but rather aimed at evoking a biblical imagery.

[83] Susan Reynolds, 'Medieval "Origines Gentium" and the Community of the realm', *History*, 224 (1983), p. 375.
[84] Drukker, 'Thirty-Three Murderous Sisters', p. 459.
[85] Drukker, 'Thirty-Three Murderous Sisters', p. 453.

In the Middle Ages the name Gogmagog retained extremely fluid associations. Yet, since the names Gog and Magog appear in both Genesis and the book of Revelation, they appear to be strongly associated with beginnings and endings.[86] Victor Schreb also adds that 'while their meaning fluctuates as they are appropriated by different groups for different purposes, "Gog and Magog" illustrate the way in which "the other" could at one time or another demarcate a cultural boundary or be assimilated to a cultural center.'[87] In the narrative of the foundation of England, Gogmagog is depicted as a giant, thus belonging to that same otherness outlined by Schreb's definition. Medieval thinkers regarded monsters – and giants as well – as something beyond their comprehension, but still part of God's creation.[88]

Although monsters are systematically destroyed in medieval narratives, they still serve a specific purpose: they allow the hero's greatness to be celebrated.[89] Corineus, Guy of Warwick, Beues of Hamtoun, all earned everlasting fame by defeating monstrous opponents. However, giants might also represent both life and death, as their existence and subsequent destruction allowed for the foundation of Britain and the beginning of a new era. [90] Giants stand as history before history, as time before time; they are mere remnants of an ancestral world. Without their complete annihilation, the proper history of the country would never have begun.[91]

[86] In the Bible the names Gog and Magog can be found not only in the account of the Flood, but also in the Book of Ezechiel, in which Magog is the name of the place where Gog lives, in 'thy place from the northern parts, thou and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army' (Ez. 38:15; 38:1-7, 39:1-7). In the Biblical narrative, Magog and his descendants, including Gog, are renegades, they are not part of the chosen people. However, in both the Genesis and the Book of Ezechiel, 'Gog and Magog are names of great power, marking off the geographical, cultural, and patrilineal boundaries that constitute Israel's sense of itself as a nation'. In the Book of Revelation, Gog and Magog are represented as enemies of God and instruments of Satan. Therefore, since giants were begotten by incubi, a connection between the Albina story and the Book of Revelation can also be established. Schreb, 'Assimilating Giants', pp. 59-61.

[87] Schreb, 'Assimilating Giants', p. 60.

[88] Albrecht Classen, 'The Monster Outside and Within: Medieval Literary Reflections on Ethical Epistemology. From *Beowulf* to Marie de France, the *Nibelungenlied*, and Thüring von Ringoltingen's *Melusine*', *Neohelicon,* 40 (2013), p. 523.

[89] Classen, 'The Monster Outside and Within', p. 524.

[90] Although no detail about its origin is provided, Gogmagog (spelled as Goemagog) is also described by Geoffrey of Monmouth as the giant destroyed by Corineus. Since the Auchinleck *Chronicle* describes Gogmagog as an exclusively wild creature, it appears to be closer to the Galfridian account rather than to that of *Des Granz Geantz*. In the French version, the giant is in fact spared to give it the chance to tell its story, thus making it some sort of civilised creature. Schreb, 'Assimilating Giants', p. 68.

[91] Classen, 'The Monster Outside and Within', p. 528.

The names Gog and Magog are also part of the narrative of the romances about Alexander the Great. The Macedonian king is in fact reported to have killed the races of Gog and Magog as they were accused of practising incest and free love.[92] Since the Auchinleck Manuscript presents only a few fragments of *Kyng Alisaunder*, it is impossible to determine whether, in this version, the story of Gog and Magog was mentioned at all; however, its potential inclusion might give rise to the possibility that this redactor had wanted to draw yet another parallel between the *Chronicle* and other texts from the collection.

The elements characterising the story of Albina seem to reverberate not only throughout the *Chronicle*, but also in the whole collection. The first extant fragmentary text, *The Legend of Pope Gregory*, narrates the story of the future pope, who was born of an incestuous relationship. He is thus set adrift by his mother with his story written on wax tables.[93] Although incest is not explicitly mentioned in the Auchinleck version of the Albina story – but it is reported in other versions – it might have been implicitly referred to in the way wherein the giants prosper. *The Legend of Pope Gregory* also proves to be connected to another competing story providing the possible etymology of the name England. In Bede's account, Gregory the Great is reported to have encountered a group of very handsome men who were about to be sold as slaves. Pope Gregory thought they must have been angels and was thus inspired to send missionaries to Christianise Britain. That country would be called England after the Angels Pope Gregory met.[94] The presence of incubi would connect the Albina story to yet another text from the Auchinleck Manuscript, *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, though since Merlin's mother is, unlike Albina, a virtuous woman, her son is not evil, but proves to possess magical powers and incredible wisdom.

Although the interest in different etymologies was certainly not unusual in the Middle Ages, the insistence on the different names whereby England was known might also have been aimed at

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[92] Schreb, 'Assimilating Giants', p. 62.
[93] Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History*, p. 168.
[94] Katherine H. Terrell, '"Lynealy discendit of þe devil": Genealogy, Textuality, and Anglophobia in Medieval Scottish Chronicle', *Studies in Philology*, 108 (2011), p. 321.

fostering a sense of national identity by creating shared historical roots. The Auchinleck redactor thus explains not only that the name Britain derives from Brutus as much as Albion from Albina, but also that England comes from Dame Inge, whose story is reported at length later in the chronicle.[95]

> Þis lond haþ hadde names þre:
> First men cleped it Albion
> & seþþe, for Brut, Breteyne anon,
> & now Jnglond icleped it is
> After maiden Inge, ywis. (ll. 1270-4)

The roughly contemporary *Castleford's Chronicle* also seems to be concerned with the various names given to England over the centuries, thus possibly implying that, at the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was compiled, this might have been perceived as an extremely relevant topic.

> Menyng is maid in mannys thoght
> Of wonders fele in Yngland wroght,
> That forme was callyd Hyle Albyon,
> Or Brut it wane þarin to wone.
> Brut wane yt of gyantes thrurowe myght,
> And so of Brut Brytayne yt hyght —
> That name yt bare in thys werld here
> Wel ner past two thousand yer.
> Þane the Saxons Brutons out drave,
> And wane the land, foreuyr to have,
> And Yngland they it namyd þane,
> So yet it callys euerylk a mane.
> So in ald bokys we red and sayne,
> Of Brute it was fyrst callyt Bruttayne,
> For ofe gyantes Bruth it wane,
> And kyng to reyne fyrst he begane.
> Of Brut Brutayne so it is cald,
> That name of hym euyr for to hald.
> Also the peple that wythin vonnes,
> Of Bruttes name war callyd Brytons. (ll. 235–54)[96]

After all, names appear to be what enable the memorability of history, as well as 'the emergence of a national narrative'.[97]

[95] Significantly, when it comes to the story of Dame Inge, Mannyng raises his audience's awareness on the existence of two different ways whereby historical knowledge is transmitted: apart from authoritative written sources, several oral tales still circulate and keep legends and possibly falsehood alive, 'But of Ynge saw y neuere nought, | Neyþer in boke write ne wrought; | But lewed men þerof speke & crye, | & meyntene al-wey vp þat lye.' (ll. 14835-8). Robert Manning of Brunne, *The Story of England by Robert Manning of Brunne, AD 1338,* vol 2, edited by Frederick James Furnivall, London: Longman, 1887, p. 515.

[96] *Castleford Chronicle, or the Book of Brut*, vol 1, edited by Caroline D. Eckhardt, EETS OS 305, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 7-8. Bernau, 'Beginning with Albina: Remembering the Nation', p. 259.

[97] Bernau, 'Beginning with Albina: Remembering the Nation', p. 266.

Although the almost contemporary *Chronicle* by Mannyng dismisses the story of Dame Inge as popular fiction, the Auchinleck redactor gives it great prominence in his *Chronicle*.[98] The Auchinleck account of Inge's arrival and treacherous conquest of the country seems to combine the massacre ordered by Hengist with his daughter's manipulation of the Briton King Vortimer. In the Auchinleck redaction, what remains of the traditional story of the Saxon conquest of England is a mere name: Hengist. However, the legendary king is transformed into the very embodiment of ideal kingship, whereas Rowena completely disappears from the narrative.[99] Yet, in the Auchinleck version, Dame Inge is no Saxon, but rather a Spanish princess, who was forced to flee her country stricken by famine. Significantly, not only is Inge's speech in French rather than Spanish,[100] but her provenance would somehow evoke the exodus of the Scots as summarised in the *Declaration of Arbroath*.

> Scimus, sanctissime pater et domine, et ex antiquorum gestis et libris colligimus quod inter ceteras nationes egregias nostra scilicet Scottorum natio multis preconiis fuerit insignita, que de majori Schithia per mare Tirenum et columpnas Herculis transiens et in Hispania inter ferocissimas gentes per multa temporum curricula residens a nullis quantumcumque barbaricis poterat allicubi gentibus subjugari.[101]

Therefore, her story might somehow be perceived as representative of both of England's contemporary enemies: Scotland and France.

The Auchinleck redactor also seems to exploit the theme of linguistic incomprehension, which is certainly reminiscent of the Hengist-Rowena story. Just as Inge might have succeeded in deceiving King Sæberht by using a foreign and possibly little-known language, so Hengist uses his mother tongue to give the murderous order unnoticed. Evidently, King Sæberht must have been like those English nobles unfamiliar with French, addressed by the Auchinleck redactor in the prologue to *Of*

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[98] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* p. lxix.
[99] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* p. lxx.
[100] However, one might argue that there might have also been linguistic constraints due to the comprehensibility of the language used.
[101] 'Most holy father and lord, we know, and we gather from the deeds and books of the ancients, that among other distinguished nations our own nation, namely of Scots, has been marked by many distinctions. It journeyed from Greater Scythia by the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and dwelt for a long span of time in Spain among the most savage peoples, but nowhere could it be subjugated by any people, however barbarous.' Records of the Parliaments of Scotland, Reign of Robert I, *The Declaration of Arbroath'; letter of the barons of Scotland to Pope John XXII,* Latin version and translation, https://www.rps.ac.uk/ [accessed on 20/11/2021]

Arthur and of Merlin, 'Mani noble ich haue yseiӯe | Þat no Freynsche couþe seye' (ll. 25-6).[102] Had Inge's proposal been made in English, Castle Horn might have never been built.[103] In the Auchinleck account, Inge in fact succeeds in persuading the king to grant her as much land as a bull's hide can cover. She then reduces the hide into a stripe in order to delimit an area large enough to build a castle, which in the chronicle's account is called Horn Castle, in Lindsay. However, the 'þwong-castel' built by Inge is also reminiscent of the Thongcaster built by Hengist, thus creating multiple intertextual allusions.[104]

A parallel might also be drawn with the Albina story. The reference to the use of knives seems in fact to be an invention of the Auchinleck redactor, as in the French text, Albina and her sisters simply agree on killing their husbands without giving any further details about the weapon to be used, 'Qe chescune, tut en un jour, | Oscireit mesmes sun seignur, | Privément entre ces braz, | Quant meux quide aver solaz.' (ll. 69-73).[105] In the Auchinleck *Chronicle*, Albina specifies that they should all conceal a knife in order to kill their husbands in their bedchambers.

> At euen lokeþ sone & swiþe
> Þat ich of ȝou haue a kniue,
> & when þat ȝe schul go to rest
> Loke þat ȝe be redy & prest
> & to þe hert swiþe hem smite
> Þat neuer man þerof no wite. (ll. 89-94)

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[102] Historically speaking, Sæberht, King of the East Saxons, is reported to have founded Westminster Abbey, which not only played a pivotal role in fourteenth-century politics, but will also hold centre stage later in the *Chronicle*. John Flete, *The history of Westminster Abbey*, edited by J. Armitage Robinson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909, p. 9. 'After him regned Seberd þe king | A gode man, wiþouten lesing. | Of bischop Milit Cristendom he nam | & Westminster first he bigan | In þe honouraunce of Ihesu & of Marie | & Peter & Paule vnder her baylie' (ll. 1139-44). The connection between this chronicle and Westminster Abbey will be further explored in section 2.3.

[103] The reference to Castle Horn might connect this *Chronicle* with another romance belonging to the Matter of England presented in this collection, *Horn Childe & Maiden Rimnild.*

[104] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* p. lxxii. This episode is evidently derived from the *Historia Regum Britanniae*. Nonetheless, in Geoffrey of Monmouth's account, this is part of the Vortigern/Hengist story. 'Hengistus corium tauri atque ipsum in unam corrigiam redegit. Exin saxosum locum quod maxima cautela aedificare incepit. Quod ut aedificatum fuit, traxit nomen ex corrigia, quia cum ea metatum fuerat; dictum namque fuit postmodum Britannice Kaercarrei, Saxonice uero Thanccastre, quod Latino sermone Castrum Corrigiae appellamus.' [Hengest took a bull's hide and cut it into a single string and began work on a castle within the space marked out. Once completed, the fortress took its name from the string with which it had been measured out; for it was later called in British Kaercarrei, and in English Thanccastre, or Castrum Corrigiae in Latin]. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, Book VI.332-7, pp. 128-9.

[105] *Des Grantz Geanz*, pp. 4-5. 'Let each one of us, in the same day, kill our own husband, privately in our arms, when they believe they are about to be comforted' (my translation).

The weapon used by Albina and her sisters thus seems to be reminiscent of the well-known story of the downfall of Vortimer's realm. In the Laȝamon's *Brut*, Hengist's daughter, Rowena, succeeds in seducing Vortigern. As soon as she reveals her desire to become a Christian, the Briton king naively organises a feast at Ælenge, the future site of Stonehenge, to celebrate the event.[106]

> Hal wærð þu lauerd king, ‖ Bruttene deorling.
> Ich æm þe icomen to ‖ Cristindom ich wulle auon.
> an þan ilke dæie ‖ þe þu seolf demest.' (ll. 7452–54)[107]

During the celebrations, Rowena pours a vial of poison in the wassailing cup and kills King Vortimer, essentially allowing for Vortigern to be restored on the throne. Well aware of the consequences such a gesture could have on the barons, she convinces her husband to call back the Saxons and negotiate. At Stonehenge, Hengist, 'þe leod-swike' (l. 7590)[108] orders his people to slay all the Britons, 'nimeð eoure sexes ‖ sele mine bernes | And ohtliche eou sturieð ‖ and nænne ne sparieð!' (ll. 7610-1) that had come for peace talk.[109] Similarly, as soon as the construction of the new Horn Castle is completed, Inge holds a feast to celebrate her new mansion. In the Auchinleck *Chronicle,* the account of the poisoning performed by Rowena and the subsequent massacre commanded by Hengist are combined into a single order uttered by Inge herself: at the word 'wessayl', a salutation usually used in offering toasts, her companions slay the king and his subjects.[110] Inge can thus take full possession of the country and decides to call it England after herself.

Yet another parallel between Albina and Rowena can be found in the motivation that prompts their treacherous actions. Just like Albina, Rowena is tempted into planning the murder of the king by the devil itself, who enters her heart: 'Diabolus, qui in corde Ronwein nouercae suae ingressus

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[106] Hannah M. Weaver, 'Translation and Power in Lawman's Brut', *Arthuriana*, 27 (2017), p. 17.
[107] 'Good health to you, my lord the king, darling of the Britons. I have come before you here, willing to adopt the Christian faith on whatever day you yourself appoint.' Laȝamon*, Laȝamon's Brut,* edited and translated by W. R. J. Barron and S. C. Weinberg, Harlow: Longman, 1995, pp. 384-5. Weaver, 'Translation and Power in Lawman's Brut', pp. 16-7.
[108] 'The betrayer of the nation'. Laȝamon*, Laȝamon's Brut,* pp. 390-1.
[109] 'Draw your knives, my brave warriors; set to boldly and spare no one!'. Laȝamon*, Laȝamon's Brut,* pp. 392-3. Weaver, 'Translation and Power in Lawman's Brut', pp. 15-6.
[110] *MED*, 'wassail', https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED51850/track?counter=1&search_id=11623866 [accessed on 10/11/2021]; *AND*, 'wesseil', https://anglo-norman.net/entry/wesseil [accessed on 10/11/2021]

incitauit eam ut neci ipsius immineret' (VI.102).[111] Significantly, in the description of the evil growing in Albina's heart, the Auchinleck redactor appears to detach himself from the French source, *Des Grantz Geanz*, in which she is described as prompted by her own pride and rather follow the Galfridian account.

Þe deuel jnto hir hert aliȝt
& consey[l]d hir anonriȝt
After hir sostren for to sende
& tel hem alle ord & ende
Hou sche hadde yþouȝt to do,
Hir lord wiþ tresoun for to slo.
(*Auchinleck Chronicle*, ll. 39-44)

Mes par orgoil de lur meyme
E par fierté e grant rage
Purpenserent grant outrage
(*Des Grantz Geanz*, ll. 36-8)[112]

Interestingly enough, in MS Royal 12 C XII, the story of Dame Inge is completely missing and no etymology of the name England is provided. Hengist's betrayal is customarily described as taking place at Stonehenge.

Thourh Hengistus forsoþe ywys
Þat made þe tresoun for þus hit ys
At Stonehenges wite ou wel
þer he hit made eueruch del
For Merlyn hem saide biforen hond
He ne schulde ner dure in Englond
Rowenne þat was so feir may
Furst saide by þis day
To king Fortiger wassail
Ant þat onsuere wes drinkhail (ll. 328-37)

The Auchinleck *Chronicle* similarly associates Stonehenge with Hengist; nonetheless, the passage describing his treacherously getting control of the country is unsurprisingly missing. After all, in this chronicle, Hengist is definitely not depicted as a villain, but rather as one of England's greatest kings. In the Auchinleck account, Stonehenge is not the place in which Hengist's betrayal occurs, but rather an Irish marvel moved to the plain of Salisbury in a single night by his messengers and subsequently called Hengiston after himself.

King Hingist made as men mai se
A gret meruaile in þe west cuntre,
Wiþ messangers stark & strong.
In o niȝt out of Jrlond
Opon þe Pleyn of Salesbirye,
A mile out of Hambesbirie,
He dede it clepe in his game

[111] 'The Devil, who entered the heart of his step-mother Ronwein and moved her to plot his murder.' Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 132-3. Weaver, 'Translation and Power in Lawman's Brut', p. 13.
[112] *Des Grantz Geanz*, p. 4.

Hingiston in his name. (ll. 715-22)

Although Hengist's treachery has been removed from the Auchinleck version in order for him to take on the role of the ideal king, the major traditional elements of the Hengist-Rowena story might have been preserved into a number of allusions scattered throughout the *Chronicle*.

Considering that both Albina and Inge are described as treacherous women who defy male authority, the Auchinleck redactor might also have wanted to allude to Queen Isabella and her attempt to retain power alongside her lover, Roger Mortimer. Just as both Albina and Inge paved the way to a new era, so Isabella's betrayal and possible involvement in the murder of Edward II allowed for Edward III's reign to begin.[113] The young king can thus prove himself as worthy as Brutus in defeating the previous unnatural and unlawful regime and starting a new era.

One final thought should be given to the Albina-Brutus foundation as a narrative of subsequent invasions, which were to characterise the whole of English history. Brutus might be perceived as William the Conqueror's opposite, as the Trojan hero is responsible for bringing civilisation to a previously savage country, whereas the Norman leader is depicted as merely disrupting England's history by unjustly slaying Harold Godwinson. If on the one hand William can certainly be considered a conqueror, like Brutus, Hengist, and Arthur, on the other, his 'vilanie' (l. 1975) somehow makes him different from the other warrior kings.[114] Nonetheless, his role cannot be dismissed altogether as that of a villain not even by the Auchinleck redactor, as the marriage of his granddaughter, empress Matilda, with Geoffrey V Plantagenet Count of Anjou would give rise to the longest-reigning dynasty of England's history, the House of Plantagenet, whose most eminent members are celebrated in the *Chronicle* itself.

[113] Julia Marvin, 'Albine and Isabelle: Regicidal Queens and the Historical Imagination of the Anglo-Norman Prose Brut Chronicles [with an Edition and Translation of the Prose Prologue to the Long Version of the Anglo-Norman Prose Brut]', *Arthurian Literature,* 18 (2001), p. 175.

[114] In the Auchinleck *Chronicle*, one King Fortiger invaded England and pillaged the whole country. The barons thus decided to call upon the Welsh King Arthur in order to free the land from the new tyrant king. 'King Fortiger after him cam | Into þis lond & it wan | Wiþ ost & wiþ wer strong. |He went þurthout þis lond' (ll. 1033-6).

2.3 Re-inventing History: Legendary Kings[115]

On King Dunvallo's death, the crown of England passed to his older son, Belinus. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Belinus is described as a great warrior king who re-established his father's laws, 'Leges patris ubique per regnum per regnum renouauit, constanti iusticiae indulgens' (III.226-7)[116] and made his England prosper, 'In diebus igitur eius tanta copia diuiciarum populum refecit quantam nec retro aetas habuisse testetur nec subsequens consecuta fuisse' (III.226-29).[117] In the Auchinleck *Chronicle,* he is conversely depicted as a meek ruler who refused to govern the country as a king, 'Ac he ne was nouȝt þerof king, | For he no wald noþing owe' (ll. 646-7). During his reign, his country suffered greatly, 'Þo þurth pride & gret meschaunce | Þis lond was in gret destaunce' (ll. 653-4). Belinus's inability to rule paves the way for one of the Auchinleck redactor's most striking digressions: the realm of an entirely newly invented King Hengist. As mentioned before, King Hengist is not an invention of the Auchinleck redactor in itself. However, in the other versions of the *Liber Regum Angliae,* he appears to be customarily described as the traitor who alongside his daughter Rowena put an end to Vortimer's realm and exterminated the Britons. Interestingly, the Auchinleck redactor not only attributes to Hengist the major traits that are usually associated with Belinus, but he has also considerably reworked the story of another legendary king, Arthur. Since it appears almost impossible to reconstruct the sources for these two episodes,[118] one might conclude that this redactor possibly drew on several different sources, but then freely used that material in order to convey a specific idea of kingship.

Hengist and Arthur seem to share some common traits. They are both described as conquerors, 'After þat, wiþ gret vigour, | Into þis lond come a conquerour' (Hengist, ll. 655-6), 'a strong conquerour | Þat was ycleped king Arthour' (Arthur, ll. 1049-50), unrelated to the previous king

[115] The distinction between legendary and historical kings has been made for the sole purpose of facilitating the analysis of the Auchinleck *Chronicle.*
[116] 'Throughout his kingdom he re-established his father's laws, always maintaining justice.' Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 58-9.
[117] 'During his reign the people enjoyed riches surpassing any period before and after.' Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 58-9.
[118] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* edited by Ewald Zettl, p. lviii.

(Arthur is not described as Uther Pendragon's son). They are also reported to have been buried at Glastonbury, 'At Glastingbiri wiþouten lesing | Þer was made his biriing' (Hengist, ll. 875-6), 'At Glastingbiri he was ded | & ybirid, for so he bed' (Arthur, ll. 1114-5).[119] In spite of Edward III's defining himself as a new Arthur, in the Auchinleck *Chronicle,* it is Hengist who embodies the ideal king, ruling with his parliament and carefully providing for his reign.[120] King Arthur is certainly described as the very flower of chivalry; nonetheless, his qualities are more those of a romance knight than those of a real king, fully committed to bringing prosperity and order to his country: 'He was þe best kniȝt at need | Þat miȝt ride on ani stede' (ll. 1065-6).

The first act of Hengist's reign is significantly an act of recognition. He summoned a parliament in London in order for the peers of the realm to recognise him as their new king. Since for this redactor every great king should also be a lawmaker, it comes as no surprise that Hengist is reported to have immediately issued new laws.

> After his barouns swiþe he sent,
> As þai wald ben vnschent,
> Þai schuld come to his parlement
> To here þe kinges comandment.
> He sent hem bode al þurth & þurth
> Þat þai schuld be at Londen burth
> Þo þe parlement was ynome,
> & al þe barons þider come.
> Þe king made hem swere oþes hold
> Þat for her lord him held þai schold.
> Ordenaunce he lete make
> Þat neuer seþþe wer forsake:
> ȝif ani þef þat men fond
> In ani stede of his lond,
> Non abide no schuld be þer
> Þat þe þef honged no wer
> ȝif þe þift so miche wold be
> Þritti plates of þe mone. (ll. 678-94)

The Auchinleck redactor seems to have carefully selected his words, as the reference to the Ordinances, as laws proclaimed in London and uncancelled ever since, can hardly be accidental.[121]

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[119] Edward III repeatedly associated himself with the legendary King Arthur, so much so that on 21-23 December 1331 he paid a visit to Glastonbury Abbey and, in particular, to King Arthur's tomb, which had been moved before the High Altar in 1278. Carley, Crick, 'Constructing Albion's Past', p. 65.

[120] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, p. 109; Ormrod, *Edward III*, pp. 98-9.

[121] This is the only instance of the word *Ordinances* in this chronicle, everywhere else this redactor used the word 'lawe' e.g. 'For he [Alfred] made þurth Godes sond |Þe gode lawes in Jnglond' (ll. 1485-6). The word *Ordinance* is used twice more in the Auchinleck Manuscript: in *Otuel a Kniȝt*, when the pagan King Garsie holds a parliament in which the destruction of Charlemagne's realm is decided, 'Whan he wolde hauen a parlement,|Þere com to his comaundement, |

The struggle between the king and the barons' party over the enforcement of new Ordinances was very relevant at the time this manuscript was created. However, this redactor's subsequently mentioning the laws setting the punishment for thieves as well as regulating messengers' activity might be considered a reference to the numerous statutes issued during Edward I's reign. Although no specific reference to any of these laws could be found in the statutes issued during Edward I's reign, they might well function as an allusion to his rather systematic amendment and improvement of the common law.[122] Edward I was in fact considered the English Justinian, as he appears to have played a crucial role in the advancement in legislative practice.[123]

This redactor's describing the construction of Hengiston – possibly Stonehenge – might reveal the extent to which he was prepared to rework his sources in order to represent his own idea of England's past.[124] Assuming that Hengiston really stands for Stonehenge, he might have subverted the well-known story of Hengist's killing of the Britons, by transforming a place of betrayal into one of loyalty. This Hengist, unlike that described in the Laȝamon's *Brut*, does not treacherously dispose of his guests, but rather creates a place in which his subjects' loyalty and respect for the laws could be tested, 'ȝif þai of loue trewe were' (l. 726). He might thus have wanted his audience not only to grasp the numerous references to conventional material disseminated throughout the text, but also to reflect on contemporary issues, such as the limitation of the king's power, as well as England's territorial claims.

[…] And [King Garsie alongside other 15 pagan kings] maden alle here ordenaunce | To werren uppon þe king of Fraunce' (ll. 43-4; 49-50) and in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, when Merlin tries to persuade the judge that his mother is no witch 'Now ich jse sir iustise | Þine ordinaunce no be nouȝt wise' (ll. 1089-90).

[122] 'I failed, however, to find a reference anywhere corresponding to the details concerning the punishment of thieves or to the regulations for the employment of messengers'. *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* p. lix. The emphasis on the messengers' recompense might seem rather unexpected; nevertheless, it might have been rooted in the pre-eminent role they had in Edward I's royal household. Prestwich, *Edward I*, pp. 156-7.

[123] The first being the Statute of Westminster issued in 1275. Michael Prestwich, *Edward I*, pp. 267-70.

[124] The crucial role played by the king's messengers might also be detected in the Stonehenge episode. The Irish marvel was in fact moved to England in a sole night by Hengist's messengers "stark & strong" (l. 717). By contrast, in Mannyng's Chronicle the magical stones were not located in the Salisbury plain when Hengist's betrayal took place. They were moved from Ireland by the English army with the help of Merlin's magic. Aurelius Ambrosius took them by way of compensation after several years of struggle against the Saxons. The site could thus revive British nationalism. In Rhonda Knights's words, 'The theft of the Giants' Ring demonstrates the importance of cultural appropriation in the formation of British identity and community'. Knights, 'Stealing Stonehenge', pp. 47-50.

The Auchinleck *Chronicle* seems in fact to offer an additional historical justification for Edward III's claims in France. In order to recover what he believed was rightfully his, Hengist summons the devils of hell and orders them to build a bridge over the Channel. Hengist grounds his claim to sovereignty over Normandy in Belinus and Brennius's inheritance, 'Þai were men of gret maistrie: Þai wan Fraunce & Normandye' (ll. 625-6). Out of fear, King Selmin of France awards to Hengist both Normandy and Gascony, 'Selmin ȝaf Hengist al Gascone | & Normundye also' (ll. 794-5), by way of compensation for his stopping the construction of the bridge on the Channel. This agreement would thus legitimise any future English claim in France. This redactor seems interested not only in dynastic claims, but also in their legal basis: King Selmin appears in fact to have transferred the overlordship of Normandy and Gascony alongside the rights connected to these possessions, 'Wiþ al þe anour þat lay þerto' (l. 796).[125] A charter is said to have been issued in order to ratify the agreement between Selmin and Hengist, 'Selmin made þe charter as Hengist wold' (l. 797). Significantly, the only other instance of the word charter – Anglo-Norman 'chartre' – can be found in the *Saying of the Four Philosophers*, the political song complaining of Edward II's breach of the Ordinances.

The use of specific legal language might have served two different purposes: on the one hand it might have contributed to giving further authority to the text, on the other it might have reminded the audience of the current political controversies.[126] Disputes concerning suzerainty over Gascony had in fact troubled the reigns of all English kings from Henry III to Edward III. In 1259, Henry III paid homage to the French king, Louis IX, as Duke of Gascony. On the death of his father, Edward I as well paid homage to the French king, Philip III.[127] However, over the following years, he was

[125] According to the *MED,* in this context, 'anour' means 'the authority or power of a ruler' https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED1723/track?counter=1&search_id=11748706 [accessed on 15/11/2021]

[126] The use of the word 'sesin' might be considered yet another instance of legal language. Metaphorically speaking, it simply means 'take possession of', but in the semantic field of law, it is a specific term (Modern English *seizin*) indicating legal possession of feudal estates. *MED,* https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED39247/track?counter=2&search_id=11748706 [accessed on 15/11/2021]

[127] Prestwich, *Edward I*, p. 85.

repeatedly summoned by Philip IV on the grounds of the feudal relationship existing between them. King Edward I appeared unwilling to pay homage to the new French king; therefore, in 1294, Philip IV ultimately confiscated Gascony from his rebellious vassal. This incident triggered a full-scale war for the overlordship over Gascony. The war eventually reached a stalemate.[128]

In 1324, the new French king, Charles IV, took the opportunity to confiscate the Duchy of Gascony again. Edward II could see no diplomatic solution other than to send his wife, Queen Isabella, alongside his son and heir, Prince Edward, to negotiate with the French king. Isabella rapidly obtained a truce with France on the condition that prince Edward, as the future Duke of Gascony, paid homage to the French king.[129] After a few years, the relationships between England and France were strained again, as in the eyes of the French kings, Gascony and Scotland could not be dissociated. The imperative condition set by the new French king, Philip VI, was that no agreement could be reached on Gascony, unless Edward III had immediately relinquished any claim to sovereignty over Scotland. By 1337, the war with France was unavoidable: Edward III replied to Philip's further confiscation of Gascony by proclaiming himself King of France.[130]

The dispute over the legitimacy of the homage requested by the French king must have been perceived as an extremely relevant topic at the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was created, since at the end of the Hengist-Selmin episode King Hengist hastens to clarify that he will certainly be loyal to King Selmin, but he will never pay homage to him. He will rule over Gascony and Normandy in his own right.

> Say him þus in al þing,
> As ich am trewe kniȝt & king,
> In al þat y may & can
> While ich liue, ich am his man,
> & trewþe euer y schel him held,
> Saue omage nil y non him ȝeld,
> To him no to liuiand man
> Whiles y mi riȝt witt can. (ll. 829-36)

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[128] Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 25.
[129] Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 58.
[130] Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 93-5.

The same claim over Gascony and Normandy is made by Uther Pendragon, who is depicted as a meek king not eager to conquer foreign lands, but rather willing to keep what was rightfully his.

> He [Uther] no wold non londes craue
> Bot þat he auȝt wiþ riȝt to haue,
> & to hauen in weld
> Þat his auncestres held:
> Gascoyne & Normondye,
> As Hingist it wan wiþ meistri. (ll. 997-1002)

However, dynastic and historical claims are adduced to justify the war not only against France, but also on two other fronts: Scotland and Wales. In the context of the *Chronicle*, the campaigns led by Edward I come to represent the re-enactment of those led by the legendary King Hengist. After all, both succeeded in ruling over England, Scotland, and Wales, 'Hingist wan to his hond | Inglond, Wales & Scotlond' (ll. 675-6) 'For þat Brut wan to his hond, |Inglond, Wales & Scottlond, | He [King Edward I] nold forlese non of hem alle' (ll. 2311-3).[131]

King Arthur's story also seems to have been significantly reworked: no traditional account of his deeds and death is provided and the brief account of Guinevere's affair with Lancelot seems to serve an entirely different purpose. As mentioned before, the reference to Nottingham Castle might have been aimed at drawing a parallel with the capture of Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer. However, one might argue that other such clues are dispersed throughout the text. Lancelot, possibly like Roger Mortimer, is described as a 'queynt' (l. 1079) man, thus possibly not only crafty, but also deceitful.[132] According to the Auchinleck redactor, Lancelot held Guinevere prisoner at Nottingham Castle for three years and ten months, 'Þre ȝere & moneþes ten | Wiþ strengþe he held Gwinore þe quen' (ll. 1087-8). Significantly, Roger Mortimer and Isabella came to power at Edward III's coronation, on 25 January 1327. They were captured by Edward III himself at Nottingham Castle on 19 October 1330, thus exactly three years and ten months later. Lancelot, unlike Roger Mortimer, was also a

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[131] In 1294, Edward I was fighting on three fronts: Scotland, Wales, and Gascony. Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 25.
[132] *MED*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED35506/track?counter=1&search_id=11738272 [23/12/2021]

noble man and decided to return the Queen to her rightful husband, '& þe quen wiþ gret honour | Þider he brouȝt to king Arthour' (ll. 1093-4).

The episode is disappointingly left unfinished, as after the words of defiance uttered by Lancelot nothing essentially happens. The scene is directly moved to the great feast held by Arthur to celebrate his wife's return. On that occasion, a messenger, one Carodoc, son of Craybonis, offered a mantle to the King. However, the apparently tangential reference to Caradoc's mantle might in fact reinforce the idea that this whole passage was conceived as a direct allusion to Queen Isabella and Mortimer's affair. This magical mantle cannot be worn by any unfaithful wife. The redactor laconically concludes that the beautiful mantle of extraordinary fabric can still be admired at Glastonbury, 'Who so wil to Glastingesbiri gon ariȝt | Þat mantel he mai se wele ydiȝt' (ll. 1111-2). One might argue that it was the magic imbuing Caradoc's mantle that allowed it to be preserved after so many centuries; nonetheless, in the light of contemporary events, the inclusion of this detail seems to suggest that the unfaithfulness of many queens, such as Isabella, might have also had a part in it.

This conclusion seems to echo that of the late-twelfth- or early thirteenth-century *Lay of Mantel*.[133] In the French Lay, Arthur's court is assembled at Pentecost. The king customarily refuses to eat until an adventure has befallen to his court. A young messenger enters the court and offers his fairy-crafted mantle, which can expose unfaithful wives. Queen Guinevere, unaware of the magical property of the mantle, wears it first and finds that it is too short for her. One after the other, all the ladies in Arthur's court try the mantle and fail the test, thus essentially revealing their unfaithfulness. Only Caradoc's beloved one, Briebraz, succeeds in passing the test: the mantle fits her perfectly. The young messenger observes that 'plus de mil l'ont afublé' (l. 846) [more than one thousand ladies have tried to wear it], but no one stood the test except Briebaz. Infidelity thus seems to be a standard practice in the courtly environment.[134] After this episode, Caradoc and Briebraz leave the court and place the mantle in a Welsh Abbey.

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[133] *French Arthurian Literature V. The Lay of Mantel*, edited by Glyn S. Burgess and Leslie C. Brook, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2013, p. 7.
[134] *French Arthurian Literature V. The Lay of Mantel*, p. 49.

According to the 2013 critical edition by Burgess and Brook, the story of the magic mantle can also be found in Raoul de Houdenc's *La Vengeance Raguidel*, in *Renart le Contrefait* and in the German *Lanzelet* by Ulrich von Zatzikhoven.[135] No Anglo-Norman or Middle English version exists prior to Thomas Grey's *Scalacronica*, which was written in the second half of the fourteenth century, thus possibly implying that the Auchinleck redactor might have had some knowledge of the French version.[136] Significantly, many scholars have classified the French text as something in-between a *fabliau* and a lay, due to its comic elements.[137] The *Chronicle* appears to be characterised by several thematic allusions to other texts from the Auchinleck Manuscript; however, this reference to the *Lay of the Mantle* might be twofold: on the one hand it might align with the other lays from the manuscript in terms of form, on the other, its comic elements might have shown some degree of coherence with the sole reputed *fabliau* from this collection.

2.4 Re-inventing History: *Vitae Regum Britanniae*

Yet another example of considerable expansion and reworking of the source text by the Auchinleck redactor can be detected in the account of the realm of Sæberht of Essex. The narrative in fact seems to have been meticulously reshaped in order to include the episode of Saint Peter's foundation of Westminster Abbey. The Auchinleck narration appears to have been inspired by the middle-thirteenth century Anglo-Norman *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Library MS Ee.3.59) by Matthew Paris, although similar accounts already circulated in the previous century.[138] Paris's *Estoire* was composed in a crucial moment in the history of the Westminster

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[135] *French Arthurian Literature V. The Lay of Mantel*, pp. 22-3.
[136] Thérèse Saint Paul, 'The Magical Mantle, The Drinking Horn and The Chastity Test: A Study Of A "Tale" In Arthurian Celtic Literature', Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, https://era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/7363 [accessed on 21/06/2022], p. 31.
[137] *French Arthurian Literature V. The Lay of Mantel*, p. 54.
[138] According to Fisher, the episode narrated in the Auchinleck Manuscript would be a direct translation of the *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*. This hypothesis would be grounded in the otherwise unattested inscription in Greek whereby St Peter consecrates the Abbey. However, the legend of St Peter's foundation of the Westminster was probably invented by its monastic community in the twelfth century. Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History*, p. 152; Paul Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power, 1200-1400*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995, p. 6.

monastic community, as in 1222 Westminster was excluded from the jurisdiction of the bishop of London and directly affiliated to the Church of Rome.[139]

Only a few years later, in 1245, King Henry III out of devotion to St Edward the Confessor ordered the church of Westminster to be enlarged.[140] It is unclear whether the renovated Westminster was conceived as some sort of response to the new French cathedrals; nonetheless, it was rebuilt in a style unknown in England, the French-inspired High Gothic, which was used in those same years to build both Notre Dame and the Sainte Chapelle.[141] However, Henry III seems to have wanted to dignify and legitimise his dynasty by having royal and religious power converging in one place. The French kings already had such a place, as they had associated the continuity of their dynasty with a single royal mausoleum, St Denis, where almost all their ancestors had been buried.[142] As stressed by Binski, Henry III's patronage of the renewal of Westminster Abbey was directly connected to the creation of the English royal state: 'the process whereby the state, the government, and the persona and mythology of the king obtained location.'[143] Westminster was already the political heart of the kingdom, as well as the place in which coronations took place;[144] therefore, a connection between the Abbey and the royal family could not but reinforce the perceived legitimacy of the king's power. Although at that point Westminster was not a Plantagenet mausoleum, Henry III's choice to be buried there, close to the shrine of Saint Edward the Confessor, certainly contributed to the recognition of Westminster not only as the centre of political power, but also as the heart of the Plantagenet piety and devotion.[145] Edward the Confessor, the very last Anglo-Saxon king, was canonised about a century after his death, in 1161, and translated to a new shrine at Westminster Abbey two years

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[139] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 7; p. 54.
[140] Henry III's devotion to the Anglo-Saxon Saint might also be revealed by his decision to name his first son and heir to the throne Edward (future Edward I).
[141] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 2.
[142] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 92.
[143] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 4.
[144] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, pp. 4; 93; 126.
[145] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 5.

later.[146] Significantly, Edward the Confessor, out of devotion to St Peter, had in turn ordered the enlargement of the church of Westminster previously erected under the reign of King Sæberht of Essex.[147]

Although Saint Edward the Confessor had been canonised some one hundred and sixty years earlier, he is not referred to as a saint in the MS Royal 12.C.XII chronicle. Apart from briefly reporting his identity, his love for the church and his years of reign, nothing else is said about him.

After him regne Edward
Knoutessone bastart
He wes a god holy mon
Ant louede wel is Cristendom
He reignede her
Ffourantuenti ȝer
Ant six moneþ al so
At Westmunster he deȝede þo (ll. 888-95)

The redactor of the Auchinleck *Chronicle* conversely devotes some 38 lines to the description of his reign and condenses in one event two miracles customarily reported as separated in the account of Edward the Confessor's life. As he was attending Mass on the day of Pentecost, St Edward the Confessor had a vision of Svein, King of Denmark, drowning alongside his fleet in the attempt to invade England. The subsequent apparition of Christ 'in flesche & blod' (l. 1960) in the Host 'Atte prestes leuacioun' (l. 1961) confirmed the truthfulness of the previous vision.[148] If on the one hand God's support to stop the Norse invasion is given great prominence in the *Chronicle*, on the other very little is said about Edward the Confessor's achievements as a ruler.[149] The account of Edward's life is thus conceived more as a saint's *vita*, than as a king's *gesta*. In *La Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*, Edward the Confessor is depicted not only as a lawmaker and a conciliator, but also as the guardian of the nation.[150] Since he came to represent a model of kingship and of national virtue, his

[146] For further discussion on the canonisation and cult of Edward the Confessor and their pictorial and textual representations, see Cynthia Turner Camp, *Anglo-Saxon Saints Lives as History Writing in Late Medieval England*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015, pp. 133- 72.
[147] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, pp. 4; 54.
[148] These miracle stories are visually represented in two full-page illuminations inserted in the *Abbreviatio* of Domesday Book, possibly compiled around 1241 in Westminster Abbey alongside other episodes from the life of Edward the Confessor. Madeline Harrison, 'A Life of St. Edward the Confessor in Early Fourteenth-Century Stained Glass at Fecamp, in Normandy', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 26 (1963), p. 29.
[149] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 86.
[150] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, pp. 62-3.

portrait as a saint cannot but be transformed into that of the patron of the nation.[151] At the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was created, St Edward the Confessor was still worshipped as a national saint, as his cult had not yet been entirely replaced by that of Saint George.[152]

Significantly, St Peter as well is connected to the endorsement of institutional power. According to Matthew Paris, when Edward the Confessor was in exile, the bishop of Winchester had a vision in which the King was anointed by St Peter himself.[153] Therefore, the importance given to both the episode of St Peter's consecration of Westminster and the life of Saint Edward in the Auchinleck *Chronicle* might have been aimed at offering a strong religious support for the identification of Westminster as the core of centralised royal power.

Although its strong local connections as well as its relevance to the royal family allowed the cult of Edward the Confessor to flourish, the Anglo-Saxon king appears to have remained an institutional saint, 'a saint more of Westminster and its political élite than of the nation'.[154] In 1336, upon the death of his brother, John of Eltham, Edward III decreed not only that his brother's body should be transferred to Westminster Abbey, in the most honourable and prominent areas near the shrine of St Edward the Confessor, but also that the whole site should be reserved for the royal family.[155] At the time the Auchinleck was created, Westminster had thus come to be perceived as a proper mausoleum for the royal family. By the end of the fourteenth century the shrine of St Edward had lost its

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[151] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, pp. 6-7.
[152] St George appears only once in the Auchinleck Manuscript, in *Beues of Hamtoun*. The eponymous hero exhorts Saint George to help him in his fight against a dragon, 'A nemenede sein Gorge, our leuedi kniȝt' (l. 2641).
[153] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 63. This episode is also narrated in one of the *Liber Regum Angliae*'s alleged sources, namely William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. 'Viderat quondam somnii reuelatione seculi illius felicitatem Brihtwoldus Wiltunensis episcopus, uiderat et annuntiauerat. Nam dum tempore regis Cnutonis caelestibus apud Glastoniam lucubraret excubiis, subissetque illum cogitatio, quae frequenter angebat, de regia stirpe Anglorum pene deleta, haec meditanti sopor irrepsit: et ecce in superna raptus uidet apostolorum principem Petrum ipsum Eduardum, qui tunc in Normannia exulabat, in regem consecrare, celibe designate uita et certo uiginti quattuor annorum numero regni computato; eidemque conquerenti de posteritate respondere: "Regnum Anglorum est Dei; post te prouidit regem ad placitum sui."'(II.221) 'The felicity of that generation had once been revealed in a dream to Brihtwold bishop of Wiltshire; he had seen it and spread the news. For in the days of King Cnut, at Glastonbury, as he was lying awake immersed in heavenly meditation, he was beset by the thought, which frequently distressed him, of the royal line of England and how it was almost completely destroyed. During these thoughts sleep overcame him, and lo, he was rapt up to Heaven and saw Peter himself, prince of the Apostles, consecrating Edward, who was at that time an exile in Normandy, as king, laying down a celibate life for him and allotting him a definite span of twenty-four years on the throne; and when he complained of his lack of posterity, the reply was: "The English kingdom is in the hand of God, and after you He has provided a king as pleases Him."' William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, pp. 406-7.
[154] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, pp. 53-4.
[155] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 92.

importance; nonetheless, Westminster Abbey retained a strong political role, as it continued to be associated with the site of royal burials. The prominence given to Edward the Confessor in the *Chronicle* might also cast a new light on the possible audience of the Auchinleck Manuscript: since the cult of the Anglo-Saxon king was almost exclusively associated with the royal family and its *entourage*, the national hagiography promoted in the *Chronicle* appears to appeal more to the country's political élite, than to a middle-class audience.[156]

The Auchinleck *Chronicle* also mentions another saint-king from the tenth century, Saint Edgar. Once again, although at the beginning of the fourteenth century King Edgard had already been canonised, only the Auchinleck *Chronicle* appears to mention him as 'Seynt Edgar', whereas in the roughly contemporary MS Royal 12 C XII he is merely referred to as 'Edgar'.[157] The two chronicles appear to follow closely the account of Edgar's life provided by William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, as both describe the miraculous events surrounding his birth and reburial. Edgar is somehow predestined to be a great king, one who will bring peace and prosperity to his realm. At the very moment he was born, St Dunstan had a vision foretelling the future king's greatness, 'Denique uulgatum est quod eo nascente angelicam uocem Dunstanus exceperit: "Pax Angliae quam diu puer iste regnauerit et Dunstanus noster uixerit."'(II.148)[158] The miracle that led to his canonisation occurred some seventy-seven years after his death. During the reign of Edward the Confessor, the abbot of Glastonbury, Æthelweard, opened King Edgar's tomb in order to transfer his remains to a new sepulchre. The king's incorrupt body still proved to have bright blood flowing through his veins.

> Namque nec illud oblitterandum quod, cum abbas Eilwardus eius tumulum anno incarnationis Domini millesimo quinquagesimo secundo effondisset, inuenit corpus nullius labis conscium. Quod cum eum ad reuerentiam debuisset inflectere, ad audaciam leuauit; nam quia locellus quem parauerat difficilem pro magnitudine corporis minabatur ingressum, regales exuuias ferro temerauit, unde

[156] One might argue that the cult of Edward the Confessor could also be used to endorse William the Conqueror's claim to the English throne, as, according to William of Malmesbury, King Edward the Confessor had designated the Duke of Normandy as his future heir, 'itaque defuncto cognato, quia spes prioris erat solute suffragii, Willelmo comiti Normanniae successionem Angliae dedit.' (II.228) 'so [the king] having by his kinsman's death lost the hope of his first choice, gave succession in England to William duke of Normandy.' Harold Godwinson's attempt to seize the throne could thus be interpreted as a breach of King Edward's last will. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, pp. 416-7.

[157] The political Anglo-Saxon saint kings Edmund, Edgar, and Edward the Confessor are never referred to as saints in the manuscript Royal 12 C XII.

[158] 'It is widely believed, for example, that when he [Edgar] was born Dunstan heard the voice of an angel, saying: "Peace be to England, as long as this child is king and our beloved Dunstan lives."' William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, pp. 238-9.

> continuo sanguis undatim emicans astantium corda pauore concussit. Ita regium corpus in scrinio, quod ipsi aecclesiae contulerat, super altare locatum est cum capite sancti Apollinaris et reliquiis Vincentii martiris, quae ille magno empta decori domus Dei audiecerat. (II.160)[159]

Unlike the account of Edward the Confessor's life, that of Edgard mainly focuses on his achievements as a ruler. The narrative is in fact supplemented with seven additional lines highlighting King Edgar's commitment to law and justice. Although he was a peaceful king, he was certainly not a meek one. His sense of retributive justice was so strong that even the smallest crime could not go unpunished.[160]

> No loued he noiþer fiȝt no striif:
> Þer nas man non so heye,
> In his lond fer no neye,
> Þat tre[s]passed bi day or niȝt,
> Oȝain þe lawe ani wiȝt,
> He schuld fong his mede
> Riȝt after þe selue dede. (ll. 1728-34)

The Auchinleck account of Edgar's life thus seems to explore one of the most important themes reverberating throughout the *Chronicle*: the pivotal role played by laws in the portrait of ideal kingship.

Some fifty lines later, another saint-king, Saint Edmund, is also mentioned. The account of Edmund's life might have derived from the combination of different unrelated sources.[161] However, it appears that this redactor had somehow confused two different Anglo-Saxon kings, both named Edmund and both killed by the Danes. The Edmund buried at Bury St Edmunds, 'at Biri, ywis, | Seynt Edmund schrined is' (ll. 1849-50) is the King of East Anglia, Edmund the Martyr, who was killed by

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[159] 'For nor should we forget that when Abbot Æthelweard opened his tomb in the year of our Lord 1052, he found his body clear of all stain. This should have moved him to reverence; but it made him bolder, for as the coffin that he had prepared threatened to make it hard to insert the corpse because of its size, he rashly took a knife to the king's remains, whence blood at once spurted in streams, to the terror of the bystanders. Thus the king's body was placed in a casket which he had given to the church, over the altar, with the head of St Apollinaris and relics of Vincent the martyr which he had bought for a great sum and added to the glory of God's house.' William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, pp. 260-1.

[160] Although the account provided in the *Chronicle* seems to combine elements from several sources, Zettl emphasises that many elements are reminiscent of the thirteenth-century anonymous *Le Livere de Reis de Brittanie e Le Livere de Reis de Engletere*. *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, p. lxxxiii. The narrative provided by both Geoffrey Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* (ll. 3587-3858) and the *Prose Brut* (ll. 3355-3440) is substantially different, as both focus on the king's love for women; nevertheless, his sense of justice is equally emphasised. Upon realising that one of his knights, Æthelwald, had deceived him and married the beautiful Ælfthryth in his place, he appointed him governor of York and of the lands North of the Humber. There, Æthelwald found his death at the hands of outlaws, possibly sent by the king himself. Geffrei Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis | History of the English*, edited and translated by Ian Short, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 197-211. *Prose Brut to 1332*, edited by Heather Pagan, Manchester: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2011, pp. 122-4.

[161] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, p. lxxxv. For the role of St Edmund as a national saint, see, Sarah Foot, 'Kings, Saints and Conquests', in *Conquests in Eleventh-Century England: 1016, 1066*, edited by Laura Ashe and Emily Joan Ward, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020, pp. 140-64.

the Danes around 870 AD. The Edmund who fought against King Cnut lived some 150 years later. Edmund Ironside, 'þe yren side' (l. 1816), King Æthelred's son, 'Achelred sone' (l. 1812) has never been canonised.[162] This redactor might well have confused two kings who shared the same name and the same commitment to fight against the Danes; however, he might also have deliberately collapsed the lives of the two Edmunds in one, in order to draw yet another connection between a saint king and Glastonbury Abbey, where Edmund Ironside is in fact buried. Glastonbury Abbey appears to have been deeply involved not only in the cult of local saints, such as Saint Edgar and Saint Edmund, but also in that of legendary kings, such as Hengist, Uther, Hine, and Arthur.[163]

Furthermore, one might also argue that after the realm of Sæberht of Essex, the Auchinleck redactor only concentrates on West-Saxons kings. Since Edmund the Martyr was King of East Anglia, his story would have been excluded from the *Chronicle* account. Therefore, this redactor might have wanted to exploit the homonymity of the two kings in order to take the opportunity to celebrate yet another Anglo-Saxon saint, thus tracing a strong line of native English holiness.

> A king he was jn Jnglond
> Knoud he hete, ich vnderstond.
> Of Jnglond he hadde þe haluendel
> & seynt Edmound þat oþer del. (ll. 1833-6)

This hypothesis might find support in the comparison of the Auchinleck account with its alleged sources. The life of Saint Edmund reported in the Auchinleck *Chronicle* can be summarised in two major events: the miraculous discovery of the king's head and the punishment of the traitor Eadric. The account of both events appears to follow closely that of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum,* although in the twelfth-century chronicle they are correctly referred to Edmund the Martyr and Edmund Ironside respectively.

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[162] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, pp. lxxxvi-lxxxvii.

[163] King Hengist: 'King Hingist regned here | To hundred & fifti ȝer. | At Glastingbiri wiþouten lesing | Þer was made his biriing.' (ll. 873-6); King Uther: 'King Vntred regned here | To & sexti ful ȝer. | At Glastinbirie he was ded | & ybirid, for so he bed,' (ll. 1003-6); King Hine: 'King Hine regned here | Fif score & seuen ȝere. | […] | At Glastingbiri, wiþouten lesing, | Was of his bodi þe biring.' (ll. 1027-32); King Arthur: 'King Arthour regned here | To & tventi ful ȝere. | At Glastingbiri he was ded | & ybirid, for so he bed.' (ll. 1113-6).

THE RETRIEVAL OF EDMUND'S HEAD

Ich ȝou wil tel hou.
Al gode men listen now.
A king he was jn Jnglond
Knoud he hete, ich vnderstond.
Of Jnglond he hadde þe haluendel
& seynt Edmound þat oþer del.
& seþþe þurth envie
& Edriche trecherie
Seynt Edmund was þurth-schote -
Þat dede her soules litel note.
Þe arwes on him so þik þai schett
Þat ich point oþer mett,
For þat Jnglond þurthout
Schuld falle to king Knoud.
Seþþe his heued was of smite,
Y wil wele þat ȝe it wite,
Þan he was birid in Cristchirche
Þer men Godes werkes wirche
& now at Biri, ywis,
Seynt Edmund schrined is.
Þo men seynt Edmund souȝt
Ihesu for him miracles wrouȝt:
Þe heued seyd 'ich am her.'
A wolf in his clowes it bere
Ac þe heued non harm he no dede
Bot wiþ his fet pleyd þermide.
(*Auchinleck*, ll. 1831-56)

Caput, a corpore lictoris seuitia diuisum, dumeta proicientibus Danis occuluerant. Quod dum ciues quererent hostem abeuntem uestigiis insecuti, funeri regio iustas soluturi inferias, iocunda Dei munera hausere: exanimati capitis uocem expressam, omnes ad se lustratores inuitantis; lupum, feram cadaueri assuetam, lacertis illud circumplexum innoxiam pretendere custodiam ; eundem more domestici animalis baiulos post tergum modeste ad tumbam secutum nullum lesisse, a nullo lesum esse.
(*Gesta Regum Anglorum*, II.213)[164]

Interestingly enough, the account of the miraculous discovery of Edmund's head is completely absent not only from the chronicle contained in MS Royal 12 C XII, but also from the other possible source of the Auchinleck *Chronicle,* Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle.*[165] Robert of

[164] 'His head, severed from his body by the cruelty of the executioner, lay hidden in the thickets into which the Danes had thrown it; and while the local people, following the footsteps of the departing enemy, were hunting for it in order to pay proper funeral rites to the royal corpse, they received a gift of God that filled them with joy. They heard a noise coming from the lifeless head that summoned all the search-party towards it, and they saw a wolf, a wild animal accustomed to prey upon corpses, with the head between its forelegs, keeping watch over it without harming it at all. This wolf, like a domestic animal, followed modestly behind them as they carried the head to the grave; it harmed no one, and no one did it any harm.' William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, pp. 394-5.

[165] Although the death of King Edmund is barely mentioned in the almost contemporary *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (written some twenty years after the death of the king), by the time the Auchinleck *Chronicle* was compiled, the legend surrounding the martyrdom of the king and the miraculous discovery of his head circulated widely. Geffrei Gaimar's twelfth-century *Estoire des Engleis* reports that the story of Edmund's death was already so popular that could be found in many other sources, 'Mes si Gaimar eüst leisir, | il parlast plus del seint martyr; | pur ço que ailleurs e nest la vie | e les leçons e l'estoire, | si l'ad laisse [a] ceste fei[e] | pur l'estorie k'out commence[e]' (ll. 2923-8); 'Now, if Gaimar had had the leisure to do so, he would have written at greater length about the holy martyr. But seeing that his life, and his history and [associated] service readings are available elsewhere, he has not done so on this occasion because of the [present] history that has [already] started writing.' Geffrei Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis | History of the English*, edited and translated by Ian Short, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 160-1. The late-twelfth-century Anglo-Norman *Vie Seint Edmund le Rei* by Denis Piramus complements the account of the Edmund's martyrdom already present in Gaimar' *Estoire des Engleis* with the miraculous discovery of Edmund's head, 'La langue el chief dit e respund, | Par treis feiz, "Her, her, her!" | Unc ceo ne fina de crier, | Sulum le language as Engleis; | Ceo est a dire en [language] franceis: "Ici, ici, ici," ceo dit.' (ll. 2718-23); 'The tongue and the head said and answered three times "Here, here, here!" Each time he did not stop shouting in the English language, that is to say in French "Ici, ici, ici", he said.' (my translation) Denis Piramus, *La Vie Seint Edmund le Rei: An Anglo-Norman Poem of the Twelfth Century*, edited by Florence Leftwich Ravenel,

Gloucester seems in fact to have focused on the same selection of West-Saxon kings chosen by the Auchinleck redactor, whereas William of Malmesbury expanded his narrative to include all Anglo-Saxon kings. Therefore, the Auchinleck redactor might have used Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle* as the basis for his *Chronicle* and subsequently supplemented it with additional material drawn from a more detailed source, the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*.[166] However, the Auchinleck redactor's direct knowledge of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* would run against the possibility that he might have somehow confused two different kings.

In the MS Royal 12 C XII chronicle, no confusion between Edmund the Martyr and Edmund Ironside seems to arise, as the sole episode reported deals with Eadric's betrayal and its punishment by King Cnut.

CNUT'S PUNISHMENT OF EADRIC'S BETRAYAL

Bitvix Edriche & þe king
Þer ros a gret sturbling.
At Londen in a soler
Aniȝt after þe soper

Striif & chest þer aros;
Mani kniȝt þerof agros.
'Sir king' seyd Edriche,
'Who wende þatow wer swiche?
Vnderstondestow nouȝt
Hou dere jchaue þi loue bouȝt?
Ich lete bitray mi lord
Þat made me his steward
Of al his kingriche.
Ichim dede biswike
& sle wiþ tresoun & wiþ gin
To make þe king after him,
& now þou striuest wiþ me.
To wroþerhele leued y þe.'
Þe king was aschamed
& of his wordes sore agramed
& seyd, 'Edriche, ich wene wel
Þatow no leyest neuer a del;
Of þatow art biknowe,
Biforn heye & lowe,
Þat wiþ gile & swikedom
Þou lete þi lord to deþ don,
Þat dede þe so michel anour,
& tow were his treytour,

Bituene þe kyng & Edrich

At Londene in a soler
Anyht after soper
Bituene Edrich & þe kyng
Aros a repreosing

Sire kyng seide Edrich
Who wende þat þou were such ·
Vnderstondest þe noht
Hou dere uchabbe þi loue aboth ·
Ylette bit*ra*ye þilke mon
Þat muche god me dude on
Al þe mast*re* of ys lond
Al wes in myn hond ·
Ant uch him lette sle wiþ gyn
To make þe kyng after hym ·
Ant þou seruest þus me
To wroþerhele ylouede þe
Þe kyng wes ful sore agromed
Ant of ys wordes sinþe aschomed ·
¶ Sire Edrich seide þe kyng
Þou ne gabbest noþing

Wiþ gile & wiþ suykedom
Þou lettest þi lord to deþe don ·
Þat þe dude muche honour
Ant þou were his t*ra*itour

Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1906, pp. 135-6. A similar account can also be found in the anonymous early-thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman *La Passiun de Seint Edmund* (ll. 957-72). *La Passiun de Seint Edmund,* edited by Judith Grant, London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1978, pp. 97-8.

[166] Marion Crane Carroll, Rosemond Tuve, 'Two Manuscripts of the Middle English Anonymous Riming Chronicle', *PMLA,* 46 (1931), p. 115.

& after tresoun & gile, Men schal ȝeld þe þi wile.' Þer he lete him binde, His honden him bihinde, & his fet also He lete binde boþe tvo, & atte windowe kest him out Riȝt into Temes flot. Þus ended he his day - God his soule iuge may. (*Auchinleck*, ll. 1879-1916)	Ant after t*re*cherie & gile Me schal ȝelde þe þy whyle ¶ Þe king him lette bynde His honden hi*m* bynde Ant his fet also Were bounde bo tuo · Ant at a windou casten out Riht doun in to Temese flod · So endede he his day God ys soule iugge may · (*MS Royal 12 C XII*, ll. 845-79)

In the chronicle of both the Auchinleck Manuscript and MS Royal 12 C XII, the description of King Cnut's punishment of Edmund's traitors closely follows William of Malmesbury's account.[167]

> Eodemque anno Edricus, quem digne infamare non possum, iussu regis arte qua multos frequenter circumuenerat ipse quoque conuentus, putidum spiritum transmisit ad inferos. Nam nescio qua simultate orta, dum asperius colloquerentur, ille fidutia meritorum benefitia regi sua quasi amicabiliter impropenans ait: 'Edmundum pro te primo deserui, post etiam ob fidelitatem tui extinti.' Quo dicto Cnutoni faties immutata iram rubore prodidit, et continuo prolata sententia 'Merito ero' inquit 'et tu moriere, cum sis lesae maiestatis reus in Deum et in me, qui dominum proprium et fratrem michi federatum occideris. Sanguis tuus super caput tuum, quia os tuum locutum est contra te quod misisti manus in Christum Domini.' Mox, ne tumultus fieret, in eodem cubiculo proditor fauces elisus et per fenestram in Tamensem precipitatus perfidiae meritum habuit. (II.181)[168]

The Auchinleck *Chronicle* reports the life of another mid-tenth century Anglo-Saxon King Edmund, Edmund I, who was allegedly buried at Glastonbury Abbey, 'To G[l]astinbiri men bar þe king | & þer made his biriing' (ll. 1695-6).[169] A close analysis of the account of the circumstances involving

[167] The extent to which this story circulated can be detected in the presence of several competing versions. According to the twelfth-century historian Henry of Huntington, Eadric was not strangled and cast off a window into the Thames, but rather beheaded, his head being displayed on the highest tower in London, 'Jussit ergo eum excapitari, et caput in stipite super celsiorem Londonis turrim figi.' [He thus ordered his [Eadric's] beheading and his head was placed on a stake on the highest tower of London] (my translation). Henry of Huntington, *Historia Anglorum (The History of the English)*, edited by Thomas Arnold, London: Longman, 1879, p. 186. By contrast, another twelfth-century historian, Geffrey Gaimar, had it that Cnut himself killed the traitor, 'Quant nien fu ferme el tup devant,| li reis Cnuth I vint errant: | un petit coup li ad done, | del buc li ad le chef sevré.' (ll. 4467-70), 'And when it was firmly fixed around the forelock in front, king Cnut went straight up to him and gave him a little tap [with the axe], and this severed his head from the rest of his body.' Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, pp. 242-3. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle merely records the assassination of Eadric in the year 1017, without providing any further detail, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, edited and translated by G. N. Garmonsway, London and Melbourne: Everyman's Library, 1986, p. 155.

[168] 'In the same year Eadric, to whose infamy I cannot do justice, was by the king's command entrapped in his turn by the same trick that he had frequently used in the past to entrap many others, and his disgusting spirit was transferred to hell. High words had arisen as a result of some dispute or other, and Eadric, emboldened by the services he had rendered, reminded the king as though in a friendly fashion of his deserts: "First I abandoned Edmund for you," he said, "and then also put him to death out of loyalty to you." At these words Cnut's expression changed; his face flushed with anger, and he delivered sentence forthwith. "Then you too," he said, "will deserve to die, if you are guilty of high treason against God and myself by killing your own lord and a brother who was in alliance with me. Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying that thou hast lifted up thy hand against the Lord's anointed." And then, to avoid a public disturbance, the traitor was strangled in that same chamber and thrown out of the window into the Thames, thus paying the due penalty for his perfidy.' William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, pp. 321-1. Robert of Gloucester similarly describes Eadric's punishment (ll. 6126-65). Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle,* vol 1, pp. 446-9.

[169] 'In þe ȝer of grace it was nyen hondred & fourty ȝer' (l. 5588); 'He ȝef in to glastingbury & let him biirye þere' (l. 5627) Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle,* vol 1, pp. 408; 411.

Edmund I's death reveals some inconsistencies between two versions of the *Liber Regum Angliae* and their alleged sources. The murder of Edmund I took place in one of the king's mansions at Pucklechurch, in Gloucestershire, whereas both the Auchinleck *Chronicle* and the chronicle from MS Royal 12 C XII report it as occurring at Canterbury. The account provided in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* might give some clues as to the origin of such a confusion.

> Verum tantos et tam felices successus miserandus decolorauit exitus: siquidem latrunculus Leof, quem propter latrocinia eliminauerat, post sexennius regressus in solemnitate sancti Augustini Cantuariae archiepiscopi inopinus apud Pukelecerce inter conuiuas regios assedit, quo scilicet die Angli festiue obsoniari solebant pro predicatoris sui memoria, et forte iuxta ducem recumbebat quem rex ipse partibus de cena dignatus fuerat. (II.144)[170]

A now lost source used by both redactors might have replaced a possibly little known Pucklechurch with the popular Canterbury, essentially transforming the time reference provided by William of Malmesbury – the feast of Saint Augustine of Canterbury – into a place reference.[171] The case of these three Edmunds might all too well demonstrate the length the Auchinleck redactor was prepared to go in order to convey his own views on English history.[172] To dismiss these inaccuracies as carelessness on the redactor's part might somehow lead to missing the point of this *Chronicle*, as at least some of them appear to have been carefully devised in order to sketch a specific portrait of England's illustrious past, possibly appealing to a Southern audience.

However, the extensive reworking of the source material does not seem to involve exclusively the remote Anglo-Saxon past, but rather extend to more recent events. Another King Henry is in fact recorded between the realm of King Stephen and that of King Henry II. Assuming that the mistake originated in one of the sources of the *Liber Regum Angliae*, one might argue that the redactor of the

[170] 'But these great and happy successes were overcast by a lamentable end. A thief named Liofa, whom he had banished for his robberies, returned after six years, and on the festival of St Augustine, archbishop of Canterbury, at Pucklechurch, unexpectedly took his seat among royal guests. It was the day when the English were accustomed to hold a festival dinner in memory of him who preached the Gospel to them, and as it happened he was sitting next to the thegn whom the king himself had condescended to make his guest at the dinner.' William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, pp. 230-3.

[171] As for the Auchinleck *Chronicle*, this might be considered as yet another reference to a murder that really took place at Canterbury, namely that of Saint Thomas Becket, briefly mentioned a few lines later, 'In his time seyn Thomas | For Godes loue martird was | At Caunterbiri toforn þe auter ston' (ll. 2033-5).

[172] The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* mentions King Edmund's death on St. Augustine's day and specifies that he was stabbed by one Liofa at Pucklechurch. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 112. By contrast, Gaimar merely mentions the murder of Edmund I at the hands of his enemies, 'il [Edmund's brother and successor] le vengat des enemis | ki l'aveient par murder oscis' (ll. 3543-4); 'He [Edmund's brother and successor] fittingly avenged his brother's death at the hands of his enemies who had murdered him'. Geffrei Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, pp. 194-5.

chronicle contained in MS Royal 12 C XII might have noticed it and tried to set it right by limiting the inaccuracy to the provenance of Henry II's father. In his account, Henry II is rightly reported to be the son of the Empress Matilda, 'His moder aso ȝe habbeþ herd herþis | Hyhte Mahaud þe empris' (MS Royal 12 C XII, ll. 942-3), whereas his father, Geoffrey V, is reported to be Earl of Champagne, 'Þe erles sone of Champaigne' (MS Royal 12 C XII, l. 940), but was in fact Count of Anjou.[173] The addition of a second Henry is thus interpreted by this redactor as a reference to the eldest son of Henry II, Henry the Young King, who was crowned during his father's lifetime, but prematurely died before him.[174] He was succeeded by his younger brother Richard the Lionheart.[175] The confusion arising from the simultaneous presence of two Henrys is possibly interpreted by the Auchinleck redactor in a different way.

After him regned king Harry
A gode man & an hardy,
Þerls sone of Champeyne.
He was a man of miche mayn.
He regned þritti ȝer;
To Winchester men him ber. (ll. 2025-30)

The first problem is represented by the Auchinleck redactor's addition of the burial site for both Henrys. The first Henry is reported to have been buried in Winchester, 'to Winchester men him ber' (l. 2030), whereas the second in Fontevraud, 'Þilke Henry liþe at Fonteneurard' (l. 2037). Neither Henry II of England, nor his son Henry the Young King were buried in Winchester: the former was

[173] 'Þo [Matilda] spousede ire sire geffray · þat was erl of aungeo | In þe endleue hondred ȝer of grace · & seuene & tuenti þer to' (ll. 9066-7) Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle,* vol 2, p. 647. However, one might argue that the chronicler might have deliberately replaced the name of the family of an unsuccessful crusader with a successful one. Charles I of Anjou was the founder of the second House of Anjou. He was widely blamed for the failure of the Seventh Crusade and particularly for the diversion to Tunis that led to the death of his brother, King Louis IX of France, in 1270. In the wider canvass of the celebration of crusading ideals pervading the whole manuscript, the mention of a disgraced crusading family might have been perceived as inappropriate. As stressed by Linda Patterson, this criticism was widespread and certainly known to Edward I, due to a sirventes lamenting King Louis IX's death by Austorc de Segret. Linda Paterson, *Singing the Crusades: French and Occitan Lyric Responses to the Crusading Movements, 1137-1336*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2018, p. 225.

[174] 'Þe king let crouni to kinge · an vif ȝer after þis · | Henri is eldoste sone · at westmunstre ywis · |As endleue hundred ȝer of grace · & sixti & tene · |& sixtene ȝer he was old · þo he was icrouned ich wene ·' (ll. 9734-7); 'Vorte þe ȝonge king henri · deide attelaste · | A sein barnabes day · & as it wolde be · | Endleue hundred ȝer of grace · & eiȝteti & þre ·' (ll. 9847-9) Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle,* vol 2, pp. 683; 688.

[175] '[R] Ichard king henries sone · to engelonde com · | And after is fader deþe · aueng þe kinedom · | Þe verþe day of septembre · he let him crouny iwis · | At westmunstre hasteliche · as þe riȝte crouninge is' (ll. 9904-7) Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle,* vol 2, p. 690.

buried at Fontevraud Abbey, whereas the latter was buried at Rouen Cathedral.[176] Therefore, one must conclude that the second Henry mentioned in the Auchinleck *Chronicle* must be Henry II, whereas the first must be a different person, possibly related to the Royal family, but outside the succession line.

King Stephen was son to Stephen-Henry, Count of Blois, one of the nobles who took part in the First Crusade.[177] Amongst Stephen-Henry's offspring it might be worth considering King Stephen of England, Theobald II Count of Blois and Champagne, and Henry Bishop of Winchester.[178] A reference to Winchester can thus be found in Henry of Blois, who was not only bishop of Winchester, but also Abbot of Glastonbury.[179] He was probably buried at Winchester Cathedral, exactly in that same site mentioned by the Auchinleck *Chronicle* as the resting place of the first King Henry. However, he was no king. His brother Theobald II Count of Blois and Champagne had a son Henry, who distinguished himself during the Second Crusade. That Henry had a son in turn, another Henry, Henry II Count of Champagne, who took part in the Third Crusade, alongside Richard I. He was crowned King of Jerusalem, in 1192, on Conrad of Montferrat's death, thus perfectly matching the description provided in the *Chronicle*, 'After him regned king Harry | A gode man & an hardy,| Þerls sone of Champeyne' (ll. 2025-7).[180] However, he is not reported to have been buried in Winchester. Another Henry, son to a Count of Champagne and count himself, might also be a suitable candidate to fit the description of the *Chronicle*. Before leaving for the Holy Land and eventually being crowned king of Jerusalem, Henry II Count of Champagne relinquished his title in favour of his younger

[176] 'In normandye he deyde' (l. 9850) Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle,* vol 2, p. 688.
[177] 'To steuene bleis ispoused [Adela of Normany, William the Conqueror's daughter]· as god ȝef þat cas ·| & bi him adde ek an sone · steuene was is name ·| Þat suþþe was king of engelond · & endede mid ssame ·' (ll. 7628-9)) Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle,* vol 2, p. 549. For the role of Henry-Stephen in the first crusade, see William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, iv.350; iv.353; iv.357.1, pp. 612-3; 620-3; 628-9.
[178] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, v.405.1-2 pp. 732-3.
[179] William Kynan-Wilson, John Munns, 'Introduction: Approaches to Henry of Blois', in *Henry of Blois: New Interpretations* edited by William Kynan-Wilson and John Munns, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2021, pp. 1-2. Henry of Blois's being the abbot of Glastonbury might reinforce the connection of this *Chronicle* with Abbey.
[180] Ambroise, *L'Estoire de la Guerre Sainte; Histoire en Vers de la Troisième Croisade, 1190-1192. Publiée et Traduite d'après le Manuscrit Unique du Vatican*, edited and translated by Gaston Paris, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1897, p. 426. Henry II, King of Jerusalem is also mentioned in *King Richard*, 'Þe douhti erl of Chaumpeyn' (l. 913).

brother, Theobald III.[181] Since that Theobald had married Blanche of Navarre, their son, Theobald IV, also inherited the kingdom of Navarre, thus becoming Theobald I, King of Navarre. The title was first inherited by his son, Theobald II of Navarre and Champagne – who, significantly, took part in the Eighth Crusade alongside prince Edward, future King Edward I – but upon his death, it passed to his younger brother, King Henry I of Navarre. That Henry would thus perfectly match the description provided in the *Chronicle*, being at the same time son to the earl of Champagne, as well as King of Navarre. Nonetheless, he is not reported to have been buried in Winchester.

In spite of the problems involving the identification of either of these Henrys with those mentioned in the chronicle, it might be worth considering that this family proves to have been closely connected with the English crown, as King Henry I of Navarre was Queen Isabella's grandfather. On Henry I's death, the throne of Navarre passed down to his only daughter, Joan of Navarre, who became Queen of France through her marriage with Philip the Fair. Isabella of France was one of their children. Therefore, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the members of this family not only were at the centre of the European political chessboard, but they might also have been looked at as true champions of Christianity, as many of them had been involved in the Crusades.

One last thought should be given to the close relationship this family enjoyed with the new Earldom of Lancaster that Henry III had created in 1267 for one his sons, Edmund Crouchback. On his second marriage with Blanche of Artois, Edmund Crouchback was also granted the courtesy title of Count Champagne and Brie, on behalf of his new wife's daughter Joan, thus implying that between 1276 and 1284 the titles of Earl of Lancaster and Count of Champagne and Brie resided with the same person.[182] Edmund was also a crusader, as he joined Edward I's Crusade in 1270. Edmund's sons, Thomas and Henry, the second and third Earl of Lancaster respectively, played a pivotal role in the

[181] All information about the Counts of Champagne has been taken from Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville, Léon Pigeotte, *Histoire des Ducs et des Comtes de Champagne depuis le VIe Siècle Jusqu'à la fin du XIe. Vols 5-6*, Paris: A. Durand, 1859.

[182] 'Edmund [called Edmund Crouchback], first earl of Lancaster and first earl of Leicester', *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8504?rskey=QeJsKl&result=1 [accessed on 10/05/2022]

early fourteenth century, as they both opposed the power of Edward II. Thomas was almost raised to the rank of a political martyr after being executed in 1322, whereas Henry orchestrated the deposition of Edward II and was also in Nottingham when Edward III's coupe d'état took place.[183] Thomas was a close friend and ally to Guy Beauchamp, tenth Earl of Warwick. The house of Warwick was one of the most important families in the peerage of England and was also suggested by Turville-Petre as a possible candidate for the patronage of the Auchinleck Manuscript.[184]

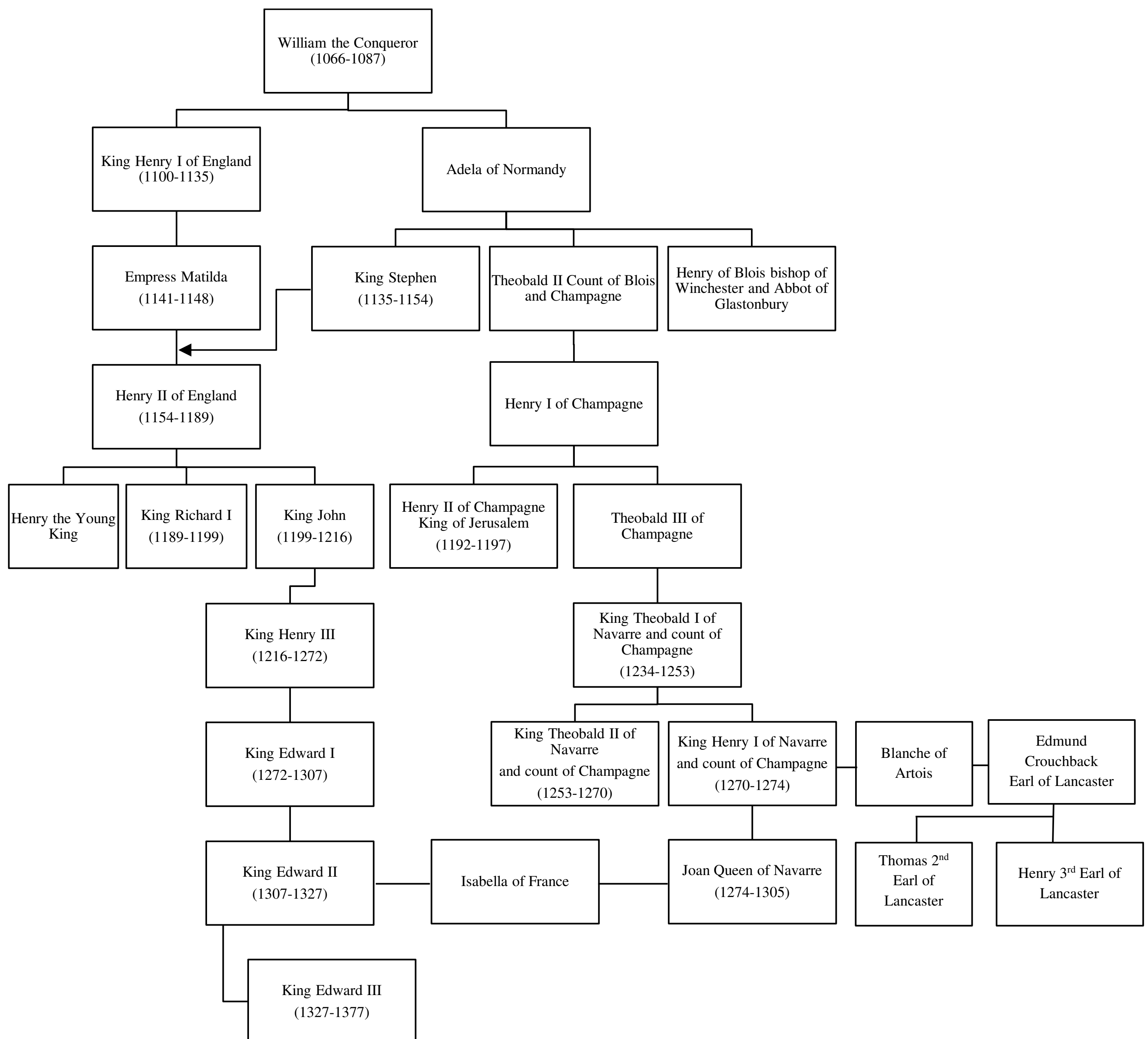

Figure 2. William the Conqueror's Descendants

[183] Ormrod, *Edward III*, p. 90.
[184] See Chapter 1.6.

The centrality of the houses of Lancaster and Warwick on the fourteenth-century political scene thus makes them both suitable candidates for the patronage of a manuscript such as the Auchinleck. It would be entirely acceptable for a newly created title to affirm the antiquity of their blood, by constructing an ancient genealogy. However, although 'Chaunpayne' (l. 377) and 'Beauchaump' (l. 354) are both listed in the *Battle Abbey Roll*, 'Lancaster' is not mentioned. Nonetheless, this might be explained by the recent creation of the title. Although no final conclusion has yet been drawn on the patronage of the Auchinleck Manuscript, the entangled connections amongst these families might demonstrate all too well the extent to which no hypothesis can be dismissed as mere inaccuracies on this redactor's part.

Returning to the realm of Henry II, it might be worth noticing that in the Auchinleck *Chronicle*, the murder of Thomas Becket is only briefly mentioned. Instead of reporting the circumstances of the Archbishop of Canterbury's assassination this redactor prefers to move directly to the many miracles performed by the Saint. This silence can hardly be interpreted as a desire for conciseness; it might rather be a deliberate attempt to avoid any reference to King Henry II's possible involvement in the murder.[185]

Seþþe regned anoþer,
Henry his owhen broþer.
In his time seyn Thomas
For Godes loue martird was
At Caunterbiri toforn þe auter ston.
He doþ miracles mani on. (ll. 2031-6)

The archbishop's assassination proves to be the last piece in the construction of a national story of holiness and devotion starting with the Anglo-Saxon saints and coming down to St Thomas Becket.

This emphasis on the lives of politically relevant saints appears to echo the importance given by Edward III to the devotion to local saints as part of a larger scheme of political propaganda and

[185] This redactor seems to have wanted to provide Richard I with as untarnished a pedigree as possible. Therefore, the removal of any reference to Henry II's possible involvement in the assassination of Thomas Becket would obliterate any possible stain on the reputation of Richard's family. The Auchinleck version of the romance *King Richard* seems entirely consistent with the idea of providing a faultless portrait of the King. It directly begins with the preparation for the Crusade, thus essentially omitting any reference to the devilish mother described in the later and fictionalised *Richard Coer de Lyon*.

creation of his public image.[186] At the beginning of his reign, much of this devotion was imbued with a strong nationalism, since it appears to have been aimed at eliciting national pride during the Scottish campaigns.[187] His great interest in saints' lives is confirmed not only by his possessing many relics – especially those belonging to English saints – but also by his supporting the shrines of local saints with generous oblations.[188] Although Edward III appears to have commissioned no chronicles during his lifetime, his attention for the history of the country and of his own family is evident not only in his promotion of the Arthurian revival as well as of in the cult of royal saints, but also in the celebration of the deeds of his grandfather Edward I. In 1327, during his coronation ceremony, Edward III had his grandfather's tomb covered with a cloth of gold as a sign of devotional respect. Edward I had thus become yet another figure of veneration for his political and martial prowess.[189] Edward III's promoting not only the cult of Edmund the Martyr and Edward the Confessor, but also that of King Arthur and Edward I, suggests an attempt to foster a sense of national identity by celebrating England's illustrious saints and warrior kings.[190]

It is also worth reflecting on the interest emerging from the *Chronicle* not only in the history and the geography of London, but also in those of the whole country, as legendary and ancient kings are reported to have founded its most important cities, as well as to have divided it into regions and counties.[191] However, this interest is not limited to the *Chronicle*, but involves the whole collection. In spite of the usual vagueness of romances and lays, *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* is pervaded

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[186] As far as the creation of Edward III's public image is concerned, it might be worth considering that, in the 1330s, Edward III resorted to using his thaumaturgical powers in order not only to foster his personal reputation, but also to prove himself a worthy member of the Plantagenet dynasty. Only true members of the Capetian and Plantagenet dynasties could in fact claim to possess thaumaturgical powers. The healing of the scrofula could thus be considered the indisputable sign of Edward III's mystical kingship. W. Mark Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', *Speculum,* 64 (1989), pp. 853; 862; Marc Bloch, *I Re Taumaturghi. Studio sul Carattere Sovrannaturale Attribuito alla Potenza dei Re Particolarmente in Francia e in Inghilterra (Les Rois Thaumaturges. Étude sur le Caractère Surnaturel Attribué à la Puissance Royale Particulièrement en France et en Angleterre)*, translated by Silvestro Lega, Turin: Einaudi, 2016, p. 5.

[187] Edward III not only deliberately associated himself with northern saints during the Scottish campaigns, but he also paid well-advertised visits to the most important shrines in the South-East of France after his major expeditions. Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', pp. 859-60.

[188] For instance, Edward III is reported to have given oblations before the shrines of both St Edmund of Bury and Edward the Confessor. Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', p. 858.

[189] Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', p. 872.

[190] Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', p. 869.

[191] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* pp. 109; 111.

by the names of specific Yorkshire locations, whereas *Sir Orfeo* and *Lay le Freine* are set in Winchester and in the west country respectively.[192] The resetting of these stories in a specific area of England might thus have been aimed at suiting the taste of a patron who was not only interested in the history and geography of his own town and county, but also wanted to claim an illustrious legendary past for his homeland. The historical and geographical interpolations made by the Auchinleck redactors would thus demonstrate the length they were prepared to go to celebrate the idea of Englishness.[193]

2.5 Brutus, Hengist and Edward I: A Sole Line of Greatness

King Arthur is customarily described as begetting no offspring. According to the account provided in the *Chronicle*, on the legendary king's death, the crown passed to a new king belonging to a different dynasty and coming from a different country. However, the new Anglo-Saxon King Æthelberht (Æthelberht of Kent?) did not conquer the country with sword and fire. The transition between the Welsh Arthur and the Anglo-Saxon Æthelberht occurred with no disruption, as if Arthur's Celtic blood could merge in the veins of the new Anglo-Saxon kings. The conflation of these two lines creates solid shared roots on which the English national identity can safely be built. Nothing is said about Æthelberht's lineage and birth, nor even about his realm; the sole detail provided refers to the simultaneous presence of two additional local saints: Saint Augustine of Canterbury, who brought Christianity to England and Saint Alban. It seems irrelevant to the Auchinleck redactor of the *Chronicle* that the latter had been martyred some two centuries before the former, as they all participate in the same line of English holiness.[194] Although the Norman conquest is somehow problematic, it does not seem to create a permanent break in an otherwise continuous line of greatness. In the eyes of the Auchinleck redactor, Norman kings such as Richard I and Edward I prove to be by

[192] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 115.
[193] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation,* p. 116.
[194] For Saint Augustine of Canterbury, see William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, I.9-10, pp. 28-31; for Saint Alban, see Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* Chapter 1.7. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, edited by Charles Plummer, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896, pp. 18-22.

no means inferior to their Anglo-Saxon ancestors. They are both portrayed as strong military leaders, administrators of justice and champions of Christianity, in many respects similar to the ancient legendary kings.

Insistent repetition not only ensures that the story is assimilated by the reader,[195] but it also draws the audience's attention to its most important themes. Therefore, since the sentence 'Al he wan to his hond | Inglond, Wales & Scotlond' is repeated almost identically for the realms of Brutus, Hengist, and Edward I, it might have been aimed at highlighting the names of the kings who are perceived to be amongst the greatest in English history. Interestingly, in the chronicle contained in British Library, MS Royal 12 C XII that same sentence occurs only once, 'He won to ys hond | England Wales & Scotland' (ll. 256-7) and refers to Uther Pendragon. And yet, even in that chronicle, it is not Arthur, but rather his father who is depicted as one of the most powerful kings the country has ever had,[196] thus casting a new light on the possible role of the legend of King Arthur at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[197] The Auchinleck redactor might thus have wanted to create a new legendary King Hengist, not only in order to sketch the portrait of the ideal king, but also to raise the audience's awareness on the major issues concerning the crown. In the Auchinleck *Chronicle*, Arthur unsurprisingly remains outside this line of ideal kingship starting from Brutus and coming down to Edward I through Hengist. This redactor also seems to wonder whether Edward III, England's little lion, would live up to the expectations set by his ancestors and find his place in their line of greatness.[198]

The many details provided contribute to making Hengist a figure of Edward I, a conqueror and a lawmaker, committed to the improvement of his country's dignity. Although this *Chronicle* has often been dismissed as carelessly compiled, it seems to raise crucial issues that are explored at length in the romances contained in the collection; thus, Guy of Warwick, King Horn, King Richard, and Beues

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[195] Bernau, 'Beginning with Albina: Remembering the Nation', p. 258.
[196] Unlike the Auchinleck *Chronicle*, that contained in MS Royal 12 C XII mentions King Arthur as Uther Pendragon's son, 'After him his [Uther's] sone Arthur | Henede þis lond þourh & þourh' (ll. 261-2).
[197] This topic will be explored in Chapter 4.
[198] Ormrod, *Edward III*, p. 90.

of Hamtoun all seem to take part in an insightful reflection on English national identity and on the role of kingship.

3 The Crusades and the Shaping of the English National Identity

The pervasiveness of the crusade motif throughout the Auchinleck Manuscript has not escaped the attention of literary scholars.[1] Crusading allowed for the creation of a cohesive Christian community across regional and linguistic divides.[2] Through the Crusades, England discovered itself a united nation with a quasi-legendary leader, Richard the Lionheart, possibly capable of challenging in terms of renown the French Charlemagne. When it came to leading the expeditions to the Holy Land, the kings of France deemed themselves endowed with a divinely derived power, which made them superior to the rulers of any other country in Europe and thus crusade leaders.[3] The line connecting Charlemagne, Godfrey of Bouillon and Saint Louis IX was considered evidence of the role played by France as the motherland of champions of Christianity. England could not stand by. In the Auchinleck Manuscript, an equal line of greatness connecting King Arthur,[4] King Richard I and possibly King Edward appears to be drawn. The pre-eminence given to their struggle against the Saracens might thus be considered the English answer to the crusading French supremacy. The crusading spirit was not only fuelled by religious fervour, but also by indignation against those who were perceived as debased and inherently wicked enemies. However, the tales of the abuse allegedly perpetrated by the Saracens were apparently not enough to instil a sense of unity in the Christian army. They rather fostered local nationalisms, so much so that the common hatred was not exclusively directed towards the Saracens, but also towards other fellow Christians, such as the French and the Greeks. The unity of the crusade army thus appears to have been constantly undermined by internal jealousies and strife.

According to Lee Manion, the precarious balance between nationalisms and unity in the crusader armies has been oversimplified as though the Christian troops were undoubtedly homogeneous. If on the one hand the crusaders were perceived by the Middle Eastern chroniclers as an undistinguished

[1] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, Chap. 4 'Englishness in the Auchinleck Manuscript (Advocates 19.2.1)', pp. 108-41; Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity.*
[2] Lee Manion, *Narrating the Crusades*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 20.
[3] Thomas S. Asbridge, *The Crusades: The War for the Holy Land*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2020, p. 98.
[4] As will be explored in the next chapter, the Auchinleck *Of Arthour and of Merlin* is essentially entirely devoted to the struggle between the legendary and his fellow 'crusaders' against Saracen invaders. This topic is extensively explored in Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity*, pp. 177-9.

group of invaders, generically called Franks,[5] on the other the differences between the single countries were far from being levelled. Hostilities amongst different leaders constantly characterised the history of the Crusades.[6] The cohesion generated by the enthusiasm for the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 seems to have faded quickly. No subsequent crusade ever achieved such a unity. Yet, in his *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*, the twelfth century Anglo-Norman chronicler Ambroise did not compare the disunity of his contemporary crusade army with the cohesion of Godfrey de Bouillon's. He rather lamented the loss of the harmonious co-existence of incredibly disparate souls which characterised Charlemagne's.

> Quant li vaillant reis Charlemaines,
> Qui tant conquist terres et règnes,
> Ala osieier en Espaine
> Ou il mena la preuz compaine
> Qui fu vendue al roi Marsilie
> Par Guenelon, dont France avile;
> E quant il refu en Sesoigne,
> Ou il fist meinte grant besoigne
> E il desconfist Guiteclin
> E mist les Senes a declin
> Par la force de maint prodome;
> E quaut il mena l'ost par Rome,
> Quant Agolanl par grant emprise
> Fu par mer arivé a Rise
> Eu Calabre la riche terre;
> E quand Sulie a l'autre guerre
> Refu perdue e reconquisse
> E Antioche fud assise;
> E es granz ostz e es batailles
> Sor les Turcs et sor les chenailles
> Dont tant i ot mortes et mates,
> La n'avoit estrifs ne barates,
> Lores a cet tens ne anceis,
> Qui erent Norman ou Franceis,
> Qui Peitevin ne ki Breton,
> Qui Mansel ne ki Burgoinon,
> Ne ki Flamenc ne qui Engleis;
> Illoc n'aveit point de jangleis,
> Ne point ne s'entrerampououent;
> Mais tote honor en reportouent.
> Si erent tuit apelé Franc
> E brun e bai e sor e blanc;
> E par pechié quaut descordouent,
> E li prince les racordouent,
> E erent tuit a une acorde,
> Si que poi i doroit descorde,
> E ausi deussent cist faire

[5] For instance, the twelfth-century historian and biographer of the Saladin Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn Shaddād repeatedly refers to the Western army as 'Franks'. Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn Shaddād, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin or al-Nawādir al-Sulṭāniyya wa'l-Maḥāsin al-Yūsufiyya*, translated by D. S. Richards, London and New York: Routledge, 2016.
[6] Manion, *Narrating the Crusades,* pp. 25; 28.

E si guverner lor affaire
Que hom i peust essample prendre,
Non pas li uns l'autre entreprendre. (ll. 8479-8518)[7]

Crusading somehow still entailed the idea of a united Christendom, as some degree of cohesion should be reached in order to organise the crusade itself; nonetheless, increasingly strong feelings of national identity seemed to have definitely undermined the joined venture. For the ruling class, crusades could certainly increase the prestige of a dynasty and establish a connection with its glorious ancestors, but they could also be very risky enterprises from both a financial and a political perspective. In spite of the protection offered by the Church to the crusaders' properties, setting off also meant leaving all possessions exposed to the greed of unprincipled enemies.[8] Crusading thus involved the idea of coming to terms with two opposing forces: on the one side the retention of power and the preservation of national interests, on the other moral integrity and the pursue of what were perceived as the interests of all Christendom. The clash between these two forces might have prevented a concerted and prompt reaction to the catastrophic events that led to the fall of Acre in 1291 and the end of the Christian kingdoms in the Holy Land.

As will be discussed later in this chapter, the Battle of Hattin in which the Christian army was annihilated by the Saladin's and the subsequent loss of Jerusalem triggered such a reaction in Europe, that a crusade was promptly organised in order to recover what had been lost. The leading actors on the European chessboard were all involved. King Richard I of England, Philip II of France, Frederick

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[7] Ambroise, *L'Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*, pp. 227-8. 'When Charlemagne, that king so great | Who conquered many a realm and state, | Set forth to wage his war in Spain, | Leading with him that gallant train | Whom Ganelon, to the dismay | Of France, to Marsile did betray; | Again, when he in Saxony | Did such great feats of gallantry, | When he beat Guiteclin and broke | The power of the Saxon folk | With his companions mettlesome; | And when he led his host to Rome | When, with a great force, Agoland | At Reggio came from sea to land | In that rich realm, Calabria; | In the other war, when Syria | Was lost and conquered and invaded, | And Antioch likewise blockaded; | And 'midst the strife and fierce onslaught | Of battles 'gainst the paynim fought, | Where many of them lost their life, | There was no quarrelling or strife | In those old days for men to quench | Of who was Norman and who French, | Manceau, Burgundian, or who | Was Breton, who was from Poitou, | And who from England, who from Flanders. | Then were no bitter words or slanders | Cast, or tauntings harsh with scorn. | But by each man was honor borne, | And all were called Franks, whether they | Were white of skin, or brown, or bay. | And when sin caused them to discord, | The princes harmony restored, | And since they dwelt in peace among | Themselves, the strife endured not long. | Even thus should these our men have done | And, acting with discretion, | Given a good example, rather | Than vex and harass one another.' Ambroise, *The Crusade of Richard Lion-Heart*, translated by Merton Jerome Hubert with notes and documentation by John L. La Monte, New York: Columbia University Press, 1941, pp. 324-5.

[8] Norman Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades, 1305-1378*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, p. 132.

Barbarossa alongside their most powerful lords set sail for the Holy Land.[9] The events of 1291 were hardly less shocking and yet no full-scale crusade ever managed to be organised to recover the Latin States. In order to understand the relevance that texts such as *Roland and Vernagu*, *Otuel a Knight* and *King Richard* had in the Auchinleck context, it might be worth analysing the perception of the crusading ideal at the beginning of the fourteenth century, as well as the chain of events that prevented the organisation of further crusades in the Holy Land, after the fall of Acre. The next section will thus deal with the historical reconstruction of the Western reaction to the final fall of the Latin States. The texts staging the deeds of Charlemagne and Richard I will then be re-read in the light of these events in order to understand the extent to which the crusader ideal and the portrait of Christian and Saracen knights might have influenced or even fostered the definition of the traits of Englishness and the creation of a sense of English identity.[10]

3.1 The Fall of the Latin States

Before analysing the perception of the crusading ideal at the beginning of the fourteenth century, it might be worth briefly sketching the sequence of events that led to the loss of all Christian strongholds in the Holy Land. The Eighth Crusade led by Saint Louis IX ended in a total disaster. The king's brother, Charles of Anjou diverted the expedition to Tunis, where the Saint king lost his life in 1270. The crusaders only succeeded in agreeing a truce signed by Philip III of France (Louis IX's successor), Charles I of Anjou, Theobald II of Navarre and Muhammad I al-Mustansir. Charles was bitterly blamed for his ambiguous role in the expedition and the Crusade came to nothing.[11] The following year another expedition was planned. Prince Edward of England (the future King Edward I) led his own Crusade to the Holy Land, but achieved very little, since it was more the effort of a

[9] Andrew Jotischky, *Crusading and the Crusader States*, Harlow: Longman, 2004, p. 237.
[10] As stressed by Geraldine Heng, 'war, in medieval history as in medieval romance, is a productive channel for nationalism and […] religious war – the crusade – is the productive channel for a nationalism that, in the Middle Ages, is always and fundamentally traversed, determined, and articulated by religious investments: a specificity of medieval nationalism.' Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, p. 72.
[11] Paterson, *Singing the Crusades*, p. 225.

single man than 'the result of a general outcry of enthusiasm for crusading'.[12] It thus comes as no surprise that no *passagium generale* ever took place, not immediately after the Fall of Acre, not even in the years that followed. Edward I would never set sail again for the Holy Land as a king. Shortly after being crowned, his attention was diverted towards his Welsh and Scottish campaigns. Moreover, the controversy over the homage for the English possessions in Gascony made the crusading alliance between France and England a distant memory.[13]

In 1274, Pope Gregory X held a council in Lyon in which he tried to understand what circumstances undermined the success of crusades. The sinful state of Christendom, quarrels amongst fellow Christians, general lack of piety, as well as the unreformed state of the clergy were all blamed for the repeated failures in recovering Jerusalem.[14] Humbert of Romans, former master of the Dominicans, supplemented the reflection on the sinfulness of the crusaders' souls with a more prosaic consideration on the noxious life conditions in the Holy Land. No one wanted to commit to the crusading ideal any longer, as their faith was overcome by their selfishness and attachment to the pleasures of their Western life. They were thus unwilling to put everything at stake in an uncertain expedition for the sake of their souls. The Franciscan Gilbert of Tournay conversely blamed the quarrels amongst the Christian princes as much as the quarrels amongst the clergy. Both had tragically affected the spirit of unity necessary to the successful organisation of a new crusade. The Western princes had even taken up the habit of accepting knights' crusade vows only to receive huge sums of money in return for breaking their promise.[15] The Church was publicly held responsible for driving Louis IX to his own ruin in an ill-fated Crusade that was to end with the king's capture by the Saracen army.[16] In his 1971 seminal article, Steven Runciman emphasised that though both points raised were

[12] Charles W. Connell, 'The Fall of Acre in 1291 in the Court of Medieval Public Opinion', in *Acre and Its Falls: Studies in the History of a Crusader City*, edited by John France, Leiden: Brill, 2018, p. 145.
[13] Christopher Tyerman, *God's War*, London: Penguin, 2007, p. 818.
[14] Robert Rouse, 'Romance and Crusade in Late Medieval England' in *The Cambridge Companion of the Crusades*, edited by Anthony Bale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, p. 226.
[15] Steven Runciman, 'The Decline of the Crusading Ideal', *The Sewanee Review*, 79 (1971), pp. 501-3; Christoph T. Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 135-60.
[16] Runciman, 'The Decline of the Crusading Ideal', p. 505.

valuable, the main problem lay in the history of the Crusades themselves. Even in the eyes of medieval Christians, all except the First Crusade brought very little to the Christian armies, as they constantly ended up fighting against one another. The history of the Christian attempt to reconquer the Holy Land was mainly one of utmost disaster.[17]

Despite this unencouraging scenario, during the council of Lyon, Pope Gregory announced a further Crusade that should have set off four years later. The scarce interest shown by the political delegates at Lyon was a clear indication of the extent to which the Papal authority in the field of crusades had lost its effectiveness over the past decades: the complex papal administrative machine had certainly developed skills at raising funds, but was probably incapable of leading emotionally and politically a new Crusade.[18] In spite of the very mild reception received by the council – only James I of Aragon attended in person – the Pope managed to persuade Philip III of France to take the cross alongside Charles of Anjou and Rudolf of Habsburg, in 1275. [19] However, when the Pope died a year later his project had come to nothing. In slightly more than ten years, six popes, some of them for no more than a few weeks, ascended the papal throne and none of them could sort out the precarious situation of the Latin States.[20] When the siege of Acre began on 6 April 1291 no *passagium generale* had yet been agreed upon.

Though certainly not unexpected, the reaction to the appearance of a large besieging army before the walls of Acre still failed to prompt a swift response. Only a month later did a vessel bringing the last King of Jerusalem, Henry II, alongside a small contingent of mounted knights and foot soldiers reach the city. They were far too few to reinforce the Christian ranks besieged in Acre. On 18 May, the Sultan al-Ashraf ordered a full assault against the whole length of the already badly damaged walls. One after the other, battalions of Egyptian soldiers clashed against the city walls. By evening the city was lost and most of the citizens still trapped inside were slain. The master of the Temple

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[17] Runciman, 'The Decline of the Crusading Ideal', p. 504.
[18] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 816.
[19] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 815.
[20] 'I Sommi Pontefici Romani', *La Santa Sede*, https://www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en/holy-father.html [accessed on 05/07/2022]

was killed, the master of the Hospitallers, though severely wounded, was taken to a ship and left Acre. Only the Templar fortress at the southwest corner of the city still held. After a stern resistance and a failed agreement between the Sultan and the besieged contingent on safe passage, on 28 May, the building crumbled, burying what remained of the Christian defenders alongside their assailants. The whole of Acre was lost. One after the other, all coastal cities surrendered. When he managed to conquer everything, the sultan ordered all Christian fortifications to be razed to the ground so that the Frankish could never return to reclaim that land again. They never did.[21]

Although the accounts of the courage through which the members of the Military Orders made their last stand was almost transformed into legend, it could hardly mitigate the shock at the news of the loss of the city.[22] The fall of the Latin States should not have taken anyone in the West by surprise, as their stability was constantly undermined by dynastic quarrels;[23] nevertheless, the capitulation of Acre was met by a mixture of incredulity, bewilderment and rage.[24] When the news of the Fall of Acre and the complete Christian withdrawal from the Holy Land finally reached Europe, Pope Nicholas IV issued the encyclical *Dirum amaritudinis calicem* (13 August 1291) in order to announce the loss of the city and urge all European kings to join a new crusade to recover what had been lost, 'ad recuperationem celerem dictate terrae.'[25] The encyclical was shortly followed by another, *Dura nimis* (18 August 18 1291), through which the Pope ordered to gather local councils in order to assess possible plans to recover the Holy Land. Another crucial issue raised in the latter encyclical concerned the possible unification of Hospitallers and Templars. [26] This new military order should have been in charge of coordinating not only future crusades, but also the government of the subsequently reconquered lands. The maintenance of the results achieved had in fact proved to be the most difficult task for the Christian armies.[27]

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[21] Jotischky, *Crusading and the Crusader States*, p. 243.
[22] Luca Mantelli, 'De Recuperatione Terrae Sanctae: Dalla Perdita di Acri a Celestino V', *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 67 (2013), p. 401.
[23] Asbridge, *The Crusades: The War for the Holy Land,* pp. 648-50.
[24] Mantelli, 'De Recuperatione Terrae Sanctae', p. 404.
[25] 'to recover quickly the abovementioned land' (my translation) Mantelli, 'De Recuperatione Terrae Sanctae', p. 416.
[26] Mantelli, 'De Recuperatione Terrae Sanctae', p. 419.
[27] Connell, 'The Fall of Acre in 1291 in the Court of Medieval Public Opinion', pp. 133- 4.

Several recovery treatises were issued not only to assess possible ways to recover the Holy Land, but also to redesign the entire idea of crusading.[28] These treatises were issued in the form of books, pamphlets and memoranda, and all dealt with contrasting any further Turkish advance as well as restoring Jerusalem to the Christians. The recovery of the Crusader States should be characterised by a combination of military, commercial and political efforts: first the realms of Cyprus and Armenia should be reinforced in order to stop a further Mameluk advance, second, all trade with the Egyptian sultanate should be immediately interrupted, and finally, a new *passagium generale,* possibly led by Edward I, was planned for 1293.[29] However, not only did many of those who were supposed to fight against the Sultan stipulate truces and commercial agreements with their enemy in order to have their private interests safeguarded, but the increased power of European monarchies and nationalistic feelings also made a quick reaction to the tragic events in the East less likely.[30] Although Nicholas IV failed to organise a crusade immediately after the fall of Acre, three major attempts were subsequently made. The first was the Council of Vienna, in 1311, during which Philip IV of France took the cross alongside Edward II in a solemn ceremony in Paris. Although this had admittedly become almost a customary practice in the later Middle Ages, two European princes still taking the cross might demonstrate the extent to which the crusading ideal was still alive. However, since the death of Pope Clement V in 1314 was followed by a twenty-eight-month papal interregnum, this resolution came to nothing.[31] In the meantime, the reputation of Edward II had been destroyed by his defeat at Bannockburn, in 1314. The disastrous Scottish campaign was then followed by a wave of discontent fuelled not only by the repeated raids perpetrated by the Scots on the Border, but also by the king's inclination towards favourites. Finally, the famine that struck Europe from 1315 to 1317

[28] Jotischky, *Crusading and the Crusader States,* p. 252.
[29] Mantelli, 'De Recuperatione Terrae Sanctae', p. 416.
[30] Jotischky, *Crusading and the Crusader States,* p. 250.
[31] Two years of interregnum after which Jacques Duèse bishop of Porto was elected pope (1306). Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades*, p. 17.

definitely sealed the fate of the joined purpose.[32] A second attempt was made between 1331 and 1336 by the French king, Philip VI, who tried to organise a new expedition.

In 1331, Pope John XXII consented to the preaching of a new crusade.[33] The machinery of royal administration was slowly set in motion to collect the funds necessary for the campaign. At the Pope's death, only three years later, no settlement for the upcoming crusade had yet been agreed upon. His successor, Benedict XII, was far more interested in reforming the Church and suppressing heterodoxy than launching a crusade; therefore, he probably did not make sufficient efforts to try to mediate between the two leading figures in the upcoming crusade, England and France.[34] The open French support to the Scottish cause prevented Edward III from setting off on crusade lest his progresses in Scotland be nullified. In 1336, Benedict XII cancelled the Crusade, thus removing the only obstacle that had hitherto hindered the outbreak of war between England and France.[35] Between 1360 and 1369, during a truce in the Hundred Years' War, a last futile attempt was made.[36]

According to Charles Connell, these repeated attempts 'to raise a crusade can be more accurately described as latent attitudes and beliefs, or as attempts to shape public opinion, rather than as reflections of it.'[37] And yet, crusade propaganda proved to be directed to all social levels and not exclusively to the aristocracy. Some degree of popular support for the crusading ideal can in fact be detected in the 1309 and 1320 popular movements, in which ordinary people spontaneously set off on crusade. These were unsanctioned crusades as they entailed a degree of criticism of the Church, as it had failed to organise any new *passagium*.[38] The peasants' taking the cross themselves with no formal investment by the Church also involved stern disapproval of the inertia of the nobles, who indulged themselves in pompous ceremonies that systematically brought to nothing.[39] An instance of

[32] Tyerman, *God's War,* pp. 829-30.
[33] Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades,* p. 24
[34] Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades,* p. 27
[35] Tyerman, *God's War,* pp. 830-31.
[36] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 831.
[37] Connell, 'The Fall of Acre in 1291 in the Court of Medieval Public Opinion', p. 133.
[38] Lee Manion, 'The Loss of the Holy Land and "Sir Isumbras": Literary Contributions to Fourteenth-Century Crusade Discourse', *Speculum*, 85, (2010), p. 75.
[39] Manion, 'The Loss of the Holy Land and "Sir Isumbras"', p. 76.

that criticism can also be detected in the Auchinleck *Sir Beues of Hamtoun*, in which the struggle between Beues and two dragons, which were once men, is reported. The kings of Apulia and Calabria, had in fact been transformed into dragons due to their wickedness. Significantly one of them is reported to have fled to Rome and taken shelter under Saint Peter's Bridge, thus possibly passing a negative judgement on the Church and its leader.

> Þar he schel leggen ay,
> Til hit come domes dai.
> And eueri seue ȝer ones,
> Whan þe dragoun moweþ is bones,
> Þan comeþ a roke & a stink
> Out of þe water vnder þe brink
> Þat men þerof takeþ þe feuere
> Þat neuer after mai he keuere;
> And who þat nel nouȝt leue me,
> Wite at pilgrimes þat þer haþ be
> For þai can telle ȝow, iwis,
> Of þat dragoun how it is. (ll. 2467-78)

The English hero succeeds where everyone else has failed. He manages to kill the dragon with the help of the Virgin Mary in a struggle reminiscent of that of Saint George. Beues is thus almost raised to the rank of a holy figure, one who can crush the devilish dragon hiding in Rome; one who can embody the courage and the virtue of his nation. Significantly, the sole invocation to St George in the Auchinleck Manuscript is Beues' while he is fighting against the dragon, 'A nemenede sein Gorge, our leuedi kniȝt' (l. 2641).[40]

However strong the frustration and the disappointment for the inconclusiveness of far too many *passagia generalia* might have been, the crusading ideal still appears to have been widespread regardless of the social class.[41] It would thus be a simplistic conclusion to consider the failure in effectively organising any crusade as a sign of a general loss of interest in the crusading ideal. It would be as though one were to interpret the passage from the *Peterborough Chronicle* dealing with the civil war between Stephen and Matilda as a loss of faith. This redactor's lament on God's forsaking their land, 'hi saeden openlice that Crist slep', should in fact be interpreted as a narrative

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[40] Judith Weiss, 'The Major Interpolations in "Sir Beues of Hamtoun"', *Medium Ævum*, 48 (1979), pp. 71-2.
[41] Jotischky, *Crusading and the Crusader States,* p. 243.

device aimed at emphasising the misery brought to England by the war.[42] The defeat in the Holy Land, like the famine and the plague only a few years later, were justified as God's punishment for the corruption of Christian souls. Nevertheless, the expeditions did not fail due to a lack of enthusiasm for crusading, but rather to the much greater complexity of the European politics at the turn of the fourteenth century.[43] The development of centralised administration was in fact twofold: on the one hand it made it easier to collect the funds for a crusade, on the other it had progressively grown to match the rise of national interests.[44]

The trial of the Templars that followed the Council of Vienna can all too well demonstrate the extent to which national interests overcame the purpose of bringing the Holy Land back to Christianity. The unifying spirit of the Crusades had always been personified by the creation of an international militia, such as that of the Knight Templars, aimed at fighting in the Holy Land.[45] Since after the loss of the Crusader States, the Templars' existence was somehow perceived as superfluous, King Philip IV took the opportunity to seize all their wealth and use it for his own purposes.[46] This was made possible by the election of the Aquitanian Pope Clement V in June 1305. The French pope essentially played a passive role on the European political chessboard, as he appears to have merely distributed privileges to the French court.[47] Throughout his papacy, the French court exerted such a deep influence on papal politics that Pope Clement V even came to order the dissolution of the Templars at the same time as a new crusade was announced.[48] Some twenty-three years after the tragic moment in which the templars made their last stand before the Templar building at Acre,[49] their last Master, Jacques de Molay, was burnt at the stake in Paris. Many other Templar knights were brought to trial and finally despoiled of all their wealth on the grounds of infamous accusations.[50]

[42] *The Peterborough Chronicle, 1070-1154*, edited by Cecily Clark, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 56.
[43] Jotischky, *Crusading and the Crusader States,* p. 243.
[44] Jotischky, *Crusading and the Crusader States,* p. 250.
[45] Tyerman, *God's War,* pp. 27-8.
[46] Tyerman, *God's War,* pp. 839; 841.
[47] Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades,* p. 13.
[48] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 841. Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades*, p. 12.
[49] Runciman, 'The Crusader States, 1243-1291', in *A History of the Crusades* vol 2, edited by Robert Lee Wolff and Harry W. Hazard, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962, p. 598.
[50] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 841.

Conversely, the Hospitallers managed to avoid the tragic fate of their fellow crusaders, by establishing new headquarters far away from the French court, in Cyprus, Rhodes and Malta.[51] The only expedition successfully organised during Clement V's papacy was the Hospitallers' *passagium* of 1309-10 (*passagium particulare*).[52]

Timeline[53]

French kings (from 1270 to 1350)	**English kings** (from 1272 to 1377)	**Popes** (from 1272 to 1342)
1270-85 Philip III		
		1271-76 Gregory X
	1272-1307 Edward I	
		Jan-Jun 1276 Innocent V
		Jul-Aug 1276 Adrian V
		1276-77 John XXI
		1277-80 Nicholas III
		1281-85 Martin IV
		1285-87 Honorius IV
1270-85 Philip IV		
		1288-92 Nicholas IV
	May 1291 Fall of Acre	
		Jul-Dec 1294 Celestine V
		1294-1303 Boniface VIII
		1303-04 Benedict XI
		1305-14 Clement V
	1307-27 Edward II	
1314-16 Louis X		
		1316-34 John XXII
Nov 1316 John I		
1316-22 Philip V		
1322-28 Charles IV		
	1327-77 Edward III	
1328-50 Philip VI		
		1334-42 Benedict XII

Figure 3. Timeline of Popes and French and English kings

[51] Asbridge, *The Crusades,* p. 661.
[52] Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades,* p. 15.
[53] 'I Sommi Pontefici Romani', *La Santa Sede*, https://www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en/holy-father.html [accessed on 05/07/2022]

In 1305-6, the French king had managed to secure a dispensation from the pope to go on crusade in case this could threaten the safety of his kingdom.[54] This was interpreted by his detractors as an excuse to justify his lack of will to organise a new crusade. The trial of Templars was also used as proof of the French king's reluctance to commit to the crusading ideal. However, he might also have been genuinely convinced that the Templars had failed their holy mission by allowing the Fall of Acre.[55] Whatever his reasons, Philip the Fair never even attempted to set off on crusade. He merely secured the French throne, extended his privileges and expanded the country's borders.

The English defeat at Bannockburn was followed not only by the decline of Edward II's reputation, but also by the death of Philip the Fair. The last years of Edward II's reign and the coming of Edward III were characterised by a succession of five French kings who failed to organise the longed-for crusade, due to the unstable political situation. The ascension of Philip IV on the French throne in 1328 was conversely marked by renewed hostility towards England not only over English continental possessions, but also over their campaigns against Scotland.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the recovery of the Holy Land was still seen as an act of personal penance, as well as something that could bring honour and distinction to a whole family. However, in the absence of immediate prospects in the Holy Land, the crusading ideology started to be reinterpreted in the light of more achievable targets. The mindset created by the Crusades was characterised by a strong connection between nationalism and religion. Monarchical holiness, the identification of the king with his realm, the providential role that nation was invested with, as well as the consequent perfidy of its enemies were all key features of this combination of patriotism and religion.[56] National ambition was transformed into universal good, thus possibly colouring politics with religious overtones.[57] The crusading ideology was thus readdressed to local struggles first by boasting past involvement in the Crusades, then by turning the very idea of crusading into a fight for

[54] Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades,* p. 13.
[55] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 841.
[56] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 906.
[57] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 907.

national interests and finally by transforming one's *patria* into a Holy Land.[58] An instance of the transfer of crusading symbolism to local battlefields might be detected in the use of the Cross of Saint George. In the fourteenth century, the red cross originally connected with the Crusades became the badge of the English troops fighting in France.[59] This association was certainly not accidental. Edward I is in fact reported to have ordered his troops to wear the Lord's Cross when fighting against the Scots at Annadale and Caerlaverock in 1300. He might thus have deliberately wanted the war against the Scots to be recognised as a Holy War.[60] However, the use of the crusading symbolism for national purposes was certainly not an exclusive English prerogative. The French court made the same use of the crusading ideology in order to foster a quasi-religious devotion to the king. The holiness of Louis IX was believed to be transfused into any future French king, thus making him the sole divinely appointed leader for any upcoming crusade. France was thus transformed into a Holy Land in its own right.

Significantly, in 1311, Pope Clement V declared that 'Just as the Israelites are known to have granted the Lord's inheritance by the election of Heaven, to perform the hidden wishes of God, so the kingdom of France has been chosen as the Lord's special people'.[61] The English could certainly not stand by and watch. A contemporary popular verse boasted that the pope might well have become French, but Jesus himself was definitely English.[62] However, in spite of all the efforts made by both England and France to see their internal conflicts elevated to the rank of holy wars, the Popes always refused to acknowledge their status as Crusades.[63] In England, liturgy, processions and prayers similar to those used to preach the Crusades were readdressed towards local wars. In Tyerman's words,

> just as the Hundred Years War fatally undermined practical efforts to raise a new eastern crusade, so it went so far to replace crusading as the central public meritorious military act, even if many still hankered after the easy certainties of wars of the cross against infidels on far foreign fields.[64]

[58] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 907.
[59] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 908.
[60] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 909.
[61] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 909.
[62] Tyerman, *God's War,* pp. 909; 911.
[63] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 910.
[64] Tyerman, *God's War,* p. 911.

The Auchinleck Manuscript's constant emphasis on the struggle between Saracens and Christians might mirror the complex political situation outlined so far. Just as the French claimed for themselves the role of crusade leaders on the grounds of their illustrious ancestors, most notably Charlemagne, so, in the Auchinleck collection, England is presented as a glorious crusading country featuring its own crusade hero, King Richard. England is depicted as an entity to protect and revere, as it has been the homeland to mighty kings, saints and heroes: a country whose history could match that of France in terms of prestige. In the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* the preoccupation with the definition of *patria* is constant, starting with the accidental discovery of a desert island by Albina down to all subsequent invasions. The plurality of names attributed to England in the *Chronicle* might reveal the challenge inherent in defining the identity of a country, which was not only characterised by a history of successive invasions, but also by a problematic territorial unity. The later development of the crusading ideal might thus have contributed not only to creating unity out of linguistic and cultural divides, but also to a national identity based on a shared history, language and epos.

3.2 The Matter of France: Roland and Vernagu and Otuel a Kniȝt

The legendary exploits of Charlemagne and his *douzepers* are narrated at length in a corpus of texts known as the Matter of France.[65] Although this corpus is usually associated with French history and culture, several Middle English derivative poems appear to have been composed particularly after the First Crusade. These poems could be roughly classified into two cycles, the Otuel cycle and the Firumbras cycle, as well as one self-standing poem, *The Song of Roland*.[66] The Middle English Otuel-cycle dates back to the first half of the fourteenth century[67] and is made of five poems in three different

[65] These texts are also referred to as Charlemagne-cycle. Elizabeth Melick, Susanna Greer Fein and David Raybin 'General Introduction' in *The Roland and Otuel Romances and the Anglo-Norman Otinel* edited by Elizabeth Melick, Susanna Greer Fein and David Raybin, TEAMS Middle English Texts https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/melick-fein-raybin-general-introduction [accessed on 08/08/2022]

[66] The Firumbras cycle is beyond the scope of the present research as it is not part of the Auchinleck Manuscript. However, in *Sir Ferumbras*, Charlemagne is conveniently described more as the saviour of all Christendom than that of France. Larissa Tracy, 'Charlemagne, King Arthur and Contested National Identity in English Romances', in *The Legend of Charlemagne: Envisioning Empire in the Middle Ages*, edited by Jace Stuckey, Leiden: Brill, 2022, p. 216.

[67] The sources for these texts date back to the twelfth or the thirteenth centuries. *Otuel a Kniȝt*, *Otuel and Roland*, and *Duke Roland and Sir Otuel of Spain* draw on a late-twelfth- or early-thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman *chanson de geste*, *Otinel*, whereas the source for *Roland and Vernagu* is the mid-twelfth century *Chronicle of Pseudo-Turpin*. Elizabeth

manuscripts: the fifteenth-century manuscript London, British Library, Additional 31042 (London Thornton) contains *Duke Roland and Sir Otuel of Spain* and *The Siege of Milan*, the Auchinleck Manuscript contains *Roland and Vernagu*, *Otuel a Kniȝt*, whereas the fifteenth-century manuscript London, British Library, Additional 37492 (Fillingham) contains *Otuel and Roland*. Since in the first two manuscripts these texts do not appear in isolation but rather in pairs, they might have been conceived in order to be interpreted as one narrative. In the Fillingham Manuscript as well *Otuel and Roland* is supplemented with another poem belonging to the Matter of France, *Firumbras*. However, in both the London Thorton and the Auchinleck Manuscripts the poems belonging to the Charlemagne cycle are presented alongside a version of *King Richard*, as though the Carolingian and the Plantagenet kings were part of the same crusading tradition. It might be impossible to determine the interconnections between these poems, as all of them appear to be the sole extant versions of these texts; nonetheless, their being copied in manuscripts dating from the fifteenth century, thus well after the last crusade, raises the possibility that they were perceived as representative of universal Christian and chivalric values regardless of any actual military operations in the Holy Land. Furthermore, the stories reporting Charlemagne's Spanish campaigns and particularly the ambush at Roncesvalles that claimed the life of Roland were already popular by the mid-ninth century and thrived henceforth, thus making him a suitable candidate to fulfil the ideal of the *Reconquista* as well.[68]

Considering the tensions between England and France at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the celebration of the Carolingian king alongside English heroes appears somehow disorienting, as it might weaken the purpose of constructing a prestigious, exclusively English pedigree. Furthermore, in the Auchinleck Manuscript, Charlemagne's French identity is certainly not concealed. In *Otuel a Kniȝt*, he is openly described as the King of France, 'Þere was sumtime a king in Fraunce [...] King

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Melick, Susanna Greer Fein and David Raybin 'General Introduction' in *The Roland and Otuel Romances and the Anglo-Norman Otinel* edited by Elizabeth Melick, Susanna Greer Fein and David Raybin, TEAMS Middle English Texts https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/melick-fein-raybin-general-introduction [accessed on 08/08/2022]

[68] The Reconquista lasted until the end of the fifteenth century. Christopher Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019, pp. 285-306. Robert Rouse, 'Romance and Crusade in Late Medieval England' in *The Cambridge Companion of the Crusades*, edited by Anthony Bale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, p. 200; Cullen J. Chandler, 'Charlemagne: Already a Legend', in *The Legend of Charlemagne: Envisioning Empire in the Middle Ages*, edited by Jace Stuckey, Leiden: Brill, 2022, p. 22.

Charles was his name | And was born in seint Denys' (ll. 7; 10-1). Charlemagne's reputed birthplace could not but emphasise his connection with the Capetian dynasty, as by then St Denis had already been transformed into a royal mausoleum.[69] The Auchinleck redactor seems to be willing to make sure that an English audience with little familiarity with French geography could fully grasp the strong relationship between the Carolingian king and France. Therefore, further geographical details about St Denis are provided, 'Nouȝt bote a litel fram Parys' (l. 12). The Auchinleck redactor's views on Charlemagne seem to align to the customary portrait of the king emerging in the centuries after his death. A line of holiness and greatness appears to connect all French kings with Charlemagne, thus making French language and culture the foundations of Christian universalism.[70] The long-lasting tradition of French involvement in crusading allowed for King Louis IX of France to be given the epithet 'Rex Christianissimus', a title that could only confirm the extent to which France – as well as its king – was considered God's chosen country, blessed amongst all other kingdoms.[71] His canonisation in 1297 not only brought prestige to the Capetian dynasty, but also confirmed the unchallenged role of the king of France as some sort of secular leader of Christianity.

This depiction of the French king might somehow mirror the literary image of Charlemagne as a universal Christian leader. In *Roland and Vernagu* Charlemagne is in fact described as the king of all Western countries, as though he could be the leader of a united Christendom.

> An hundred winter it was & þre
> Seþen God dyed opon þe tre
> Þat Charls þe king
> Hadde al Fraunce in his hond,
> Danmark & Jnglond,
> Wiþouten ani lesing,
> Lorein & Lombardye,
> Gascoun, Bayoun & Pikardye
> Was til his bidding,
> & emperour he was of Rome
> & lord of al Cristendome;
> Þan was he an heiȝe lording. (ll. 5-16)

[69] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 92. See also Chapter 2.3, p. 100.
[70] Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 98.
[71] Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, p. 98.

This portrait does not appear to be the Auchinleck redactor's invention. In *The Song of Roland,* a similar list of the countries allegedly conquered by Charlemagne is provided by a dying Roland.

> 'E! Durendal, cum es bele, e clere, e blanche!
> Cuntre soleill si luises e reflambes!
> Carles esteit es vals de Moriane,
> Quant Deus del cel li mandat par sun a[n]gle,
> Qu'il te dunast a un cunte cataignie:
> Dunc la me ceinst li gentilz reis, li magnes.
> Jo l'en cunquis Namon e Bretaigne,
> Si l'en cunquis e Peitou e le Maine;
> Jo l'en cunquis Normendie la franche,
> Si l'en cunquis Provence e Equitaigne
> E Lumbardie e trestute (r)Romaine;
> Jo l'en cunquis Baiver e tute Flandres,
> E Burguigne e trestute Puillanie,
> Costentinnoble, dunt il out la fiance,
> E en Saisonie fait il ço, qu'il demandet;
> Jo l'en cunquis e Escoce e Vales Islonde,
> E Engletere, que il teneit sa cambre;
> Cunquis l'en ai païs e teres tantes,
> Que Carles tient, ki ad la barbe blanche.
> Pur ceste espee ai dulor e pesance:
> Mielz voeill murir qu'entre paiens remaigne.
> Deus! Perre, n'en laise(i)t hunir France!' (2316-37)[72]

If on the one hand the inclusion of England in the list of Charlemagne's conquests could somehow be unexpected as it proves to be in contrast with the history of England as described in the *Chronicle*, on the other the Carolingian king's French identity appears to be outweighed by his role as champion of Christianity. In the Otuel cycle, Charlemagne's knights are in fact rarely referred to as French. They are constantly mentioned as Christians, as if their religious identity could somehow overcome national divides.[73] The cluster 'Freinshe kniȝt(es)' appears four times in *Otuel a Kniȝt* and none in *Roland and Vernagu*, whereas the cluster 'Cristen man/men' appears eight and one times respectively.

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[72] *La Chanson de Roland*, edited and translated by Joseph Bédier, Paris: H. Piazza, 1955, pp. 194-5. 'Ah, Durendal, how fair and bright you shine, | And with what fire you glitter in the sun! |Charles once was in the vales of Maurienne | When, through an angel He sent from above, | God bade him give you to a captain count: | The great and noble king girt you on me. | With you I conquered Anjou, Brittany, | With you I won for him Poitou and Maine | And for him conquered Normandy the free | And overcome Provence and Aquitaine. | The whole of the Romagna, Lombardy, | And won all Flanders and Bavaria, | Burgundy and Apulia entire, | Constantinople that he held in fee, | And Saxony, where he does what he will; | With you I won Scotland and Ireland too, | And England, which he held as his domain; | With you so many lands and realms I've won | That now white-bearded Charles holds in his sway. | Sorely I grieve and sorrow for this sword: | I'd die to save it from the infidel. | Our Father, God above, spare France this shame!' *The Song of Roland*, edited by Douglas D. R. Owen, Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990, p. 106.

[73] Elizabeth Ponder Melick, 'Charlemagne and the Saracens: Reimagining the Sequence of Aggression in Three Middle English Romances', in *The Legend of Charlemagne: Envisioning Empire in the Middle Ages*, edited by Jace Stuckey, Leiden: Brill, 2022, p. 175.

By the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was created, Charlemagne had definitely been removed from his historical background to become the very image of a proto crusader.[74] The historical Carolingian king never set foot in the Holy Land and the Saracens of Spain concerned him much less than the neighbour Saxons. Therefore, one might wonder what caused him to be transformed into the very embodiment of the crusading spirit. In the year 800, Charlemagne was not only crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire by Pope Leo III, but the Patriarch of Jerusalem also recognised him as protector of the holy places and sent him the keys of the Holy Sepulchre.[75] He was thus considered the defender of Latin Christianity *par excellence*.[76] After the First Crusade the references to alleged connections between Charlemagne and the Holy Land dramatically increased.[77]

In an effort to find an illustrious antecedent to the first Christian enterprise in Middle East, eleventh-century chroniclers tried to (re)construct a history of the Christian struggle against the Saracens dating back to the eighth century.[78] It thus comes as no surprise that the three leaders of the First Crusade, Robert of Flanders, Godfrey of Bouillon and his brother Baldwin all claimed to descend from Charlemagne, thus claiming for themselves the most illustrious crusading pedigree of all.[79] Godfrey's being crowned King of Jerusalem could not but reinforce the strong bonds already existing between him and the historical Carolingian king. By the beginning of the twelfth century, Charlemagne had already become part of the crusading imagery due to popular legends about his reputed liberation of Jerusalem. One of the chronicles of the First Crusade, the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle,* even goes so far as to celebrate him not only as a champion of Christianity, but also as a crusade leader.[80] The strong connection between Charlemagne and Godfrey of Bouillon was to have a long-lasting influence. In his early-fourteenth-century poem *Les Vœux du Paon,* Jacques de

[74] Tyerman, *God's War*, p. 908.
[75] Alessandro Barbero, *Carlo Magno: un padre dell'Europa*, Rome: Laterza, 2000, p. 82.
[76] Jace Stuckey, 'Imagined Crusades: The Legend of Charlemagne and the East', in *The Legend of Charlemagne: Envisioning Empire in the Middle Ages*, edited by Jace Stuckey, Leiden: Brill, 2022, p. 34.
[77] Stuckey, 'Imagined Crusades', p. 38.
[78] Stuckey, 'Imagined Crusades', p. 32.
[79] Stuckey, 'Imagined Crusades', p. 49.
[80] Elizabeth Lapina, 'Crusader Chronicles' in *The Cambridge Companion of the Crusades*, edited by Anthony Bale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, p. 12; Stuckey, 'Imagined Crusades', p. 33.

Longuyon selected a set of nine figures, the Nine Worthies, who could embody the chivalric ideal. Both Charlemagne and Godfrey of Bouillon are part of the Christian Nine Worthies alongside King Arthur. This tradition proved extremely influential in England as well.[81]

The glorious portrait of Charlemagne had gone far from that sketched by his first biographer, Einhard, in the *Vita Karoli.* He had been transformed into a crusader, a ruler of the Holy Land and finally almost a saint.[82] In *Roland and Vernagu*, the Auchinleck redactor in fact reports that when Charlemagne was born, the image of a powerful Saracen idol collapsed. This type of narrative was certainly more popular in hagiography than in romance or *chanson de geste*.

> In her lay the Sarrazins founde, aplight,
> Of Jubiter and Mahoun,
> That when yborn were the king
> That schuld Spaine to Cristen bring,
> The ymage schuld falle adoun. (ll. 342-6)

Throughout the Middle Ages, Charlemagne was described as the embodiment of ideal kingship, a just and mighty emperor, who rescued the oppressed Spanish population by destroying the Saracen tyrants.[83] At the beginning of *Roland and Vernagu*, the angel who appears to Costaunce and suggests him to seek help from Charlemagne calls the Carolingian king 'Charls þe conquerour' (l. 57).

> He is a douhti kniȝt.
> He schal þe help in batayl
> & sle þe Sarraȝin wiþouten fail
> Þat doþ oȝain þe riȝt. (ll. 58-61)

Significantly, in the Auchinleck Manuscript, the word 'conquerour' is the epithet used for several English kings and heroes: Guy of Warwick, 'sir Gij þe conquerour' (*Guy of Warwick*, l. 7046),[84] King Richard, 'King Richard þe conquerour' (*King Richard*, l. 1015), King Danewald, 'He was a man of gret anour,| In euerich a side conquerour' (*Chronicle*, ll. 615-6), King Hengist, 'Into þis lond come a conquerour, | Hingist, þe strong king' (*Chronicle*, ll. 656-7), 'He was conquerour of pris' (*Chronicle*, l. 659), '& þo anon þe conquerour | Þer lete make a strong tour' (*Chronicle*, ll. 753-4), '& Hingist þo

[81] Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'A Poem on the Nine Worthies', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 27 (1983), p. 79.
[82] Chandler, 'Charlemagne: Already a Legend', pp. 13; 15-20.
[83] Chandler, 'Charlemagne: Already a Legend', p. 13.
[84] Guy is called 'conquerour' in the second part of the romance, when he has already left his wife in order to fight for the love of God.

þe conquerour | Spak to him wiþ gret honour' (*Chronicle*, ll. 783-4) and King Arthur, 'Þurth a strong conquerour | Þat was ycleped king Arthour.' (*Chronicle*, ll. 1049-50). This word appears to retain a positive connotation, as it refers to the most important – and celebrated – characters in the Auchinleck collection. Nonetheless, a close analysis of the collocations above seems to reveal different types of conquerors and conquests. They appear to fall into three categories: Christian, national and chivalric. Since both King Richard and Charlemagne set off to expand Christian dominions in an almost divinely ordained mission, they can be defined Christian conquerors. By contrast, Hengist, Arthur and Dunewald can be considered national conquerors who invade England in order to restore peace, justice and the civilisation lost to the barbarity of tyrant kings or civil war. Guy of Warwick's conquering activity in the first part of the romance is conversely mainly devoted to the enhancement of his knightly reputation and the defence of his friends' rights; therefore, he might be considered some sort of 'chivalric conqueror'. Nevertheless, Charlemagne's role is not so different from that played by Hengist or Arthur. He was in fact credited with having defended the Christian civilised world against the barbarism of the advancing Saracens, thus making him not only the defender of Christian identity, but also of Western civilisation.[85]

Charlemagne was also depicted as a knight and pilgrim at the same time, thus embodying the perfect archetype of the crusaders fighting Outremer. The long shadow projected by this combination of secular martialism with religious fervour could be detected in the Auchinleck Manuscript, as both Guy of Warwick and King Richard are described as pilgrims as well as valorous knights.[86] In *King Richard* the superimposition of the ideas of pilgrimage and crusades is even more apparent as the eponymous king is referred to as a palmer.

Þe neyȝen day after his fest
Þat was so riche & so honest
He bitoke his lond þe chaunceler
& bicom Godes palmer. (ll. 71-4)

[85] Melick, 'Charlemagne and the Saracens', p. 168.
[86] Stuckey, 'Imagined Crusades', p. 54.

Charlemagne was perceived as the very embodiment of the crusading spirit to such an extent that according to the twelfth-century German chronicler Ekkehard of Aura, a legend foretelling the Carolingian king's return from the dead to lead the first campaign in the Holy Land was forged at the same time as the launch of the First Crusade.[87] Although romances and *chansons de geste* were primarily intended to entertain,[88] their emphasis on the courage of the Christian knights as well as on the dangers posed by non-Christian opponents might also serve a practical purpose. It is impossible to determine whether the *chansons de geste* were aimed at encouraging participation in upcoming expeditions; however, they certainly succeeded in keeping crusading ideals alive and instilling them in the audience even at a time in which all Christian strongholds in the Holy Land appeared to be irremediably lost. Therefore, the presence of poems evoking crusading ideals in the Auchinleck Manuscript might offer further insight into the perception of the Crusades in fourteenth-century England.

The bonds between the Matter of France and England proved to be long-lived and profound. They might be traced back to the archetype of the genre of *chanson the geste*, the late eleventh to early twelfth century *Song of Roland.* The most ancient extant version of the epic poem narrating the deeds of the eponymous hero and the rearguard of the Frankish army at Roncesvalles is contained in an English manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 23. Significantly, the language used appear to show Anglo-Norman features. Since the manuscript is a later copy of an earlier text, the author's identity and provenance are still surrounded by mystery.[89] Yet, the poem's renown in England must have already been great. The first insular reference to *The Song of Roland* appears in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. In the twelfth-century chronicler's account, William the Conqueror's men sang the *Song of Roland*, 'cantilena Rollandi', shortly before the battle of Hastings,

[87] Stuckey, 'Imagined Crusades', p. 42.
[88] Melick, 'Charlemagne and the Saracens', p. 171.
[89] 'The Roland and Otuel Romances and the Anglo-Norman Otinel' edited by Elizabeth Melick, Susanna Greer Fein and David Raybin, *TEAMS Middle English Texts* https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/melick-fein-raybin-general-introduction [accessed on 08/08/2022]; *The Song of Roland*, p. 13.

thus possibly emphasising the inspirational quality of this poem.[90] In Wace's almost contemporary *Roman de Rou*, a minstrel, one Taillefer, is reported to have sung the *Song of Roland* before that same battle in order to raise the troops' spirits.[91] Although there is no evidence of any minstrel singing the *Song of Roland* before the Battle of Hastings,[92] these two written accounts might give a sense of the popularity already enjoyed by this text in the mid-twelfth century. This open reference to the Matter of France could have been aimed at including the literary Charlemagne into insular culture, in Calkin's words 'despite Charlemagne's Frenchness, the English for many years saw him as part of an ideological tradition of martial valor and excellence in which they participated'.[93] Nonetheless, one might argue that this could also be part of an attempt by both William of Malmesbury and Wace to award the Norman invaders with a glorious pedigree, thus essentially providing them with the status and dignity to replace the Anglo-Saxon English rulers.

In spite of having completely reshaped the ninth-century conflict between Saracens and Christians, the poet of *The Song of Roland* presents his song as historically accurate and a model to imitate also in terms of form.[94] *The Song of Roland* and the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman *Otinel*, the source of the Auchinleck *Otuel a Kniȝt*, are both *chansons de geste* written in assonanced decasyllabic laisses. Alexandrine and decasyllabic laisses were customarily used in French epic poems. *The Song of Roland* certainly provided the insular writers with the epic theme and mode; nonetheless, both metrical forms appeared unsuitable for the Middle English language. A new metre had thus to be found in order to convey the same solemnity. The earliest text belonging to the Otuel

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[90] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, pp. 454-5.

[91] 'Taillefer, qui mult bien chantout, | sor un cheval qui tost alout, | devant le duc alout chantant | de Karlemaigne e de Rollant, | e d'Oliver e des vassals | qui morurent en Rencevals.' (ll. 8035-40), Wace, *Maistre Wace's Roman de Rou et des Ducs de Normandie*, edited by Hugo Andresen, Heilbronn: Henninger, 1877, pp. 348-9. 'Taillefer, a very good singer, rode before the duke on a swift horse, singing of Charlemagne and of Roland, of Oliver and of the vassals who died at Rencesvals.' 'The Roland and Otuel Romances and the Anglo-Norman Otinel' edited by Elizabeth Melick, Susanna Greer Fein and David Raybin, *TEAMS Middle English Texts* https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/melick-fein-raybin-general-introduction [accessed on 08/08/2022]; *The Song of Roland*, p. 1. Melissa Furrow, '*Chanson de Geste* as Romance in England', in *The Exploitation of Medieval Romance*, edited by Laura Ashe, Ivana Djordjević and Judith Weiss, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010, pp. 57-9.

[92] *The Song of Roland*, p. 3

[93] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity*, p. 17.

[94] *The Song of Roland*, p. 3.

cycle, *Otuel a Kniȝt* is the sole text written in rhyming couplets; all the other poems present tail-rhyme stanzas (*Roland and Vernagu* is in 12-line tail-rhyme stanzas). Therefore, the appropriation of the Matter of France appears to have gone so far as to encompass the creation of an English epic style possessing such literary status that it could celebrate any heroic tradition. Significantly, *King Richard* not only takes on the Matter of France tradition, but also works as a field of experimentation for the most suitable metrical form, by mixing tail-rhyme stanzas and couplets.[95]

Both *Roland and Vernagu* and *Otuel a Kniȝt* – as well as any other text from the Otuel cycle – appear to have been inspired much more by the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* and by the genre of *chanson de geste* than by the relatively popular *Vita Karoli Magni*.[96] In the Auchinleck Manuscript, the two texts are presented in the same order as that in which the story unfolds. However connected the two romances might have been, they could also be read in isolation, as at the beginning of *Otuel a Kniȝt* some context is provided, though no mention of any previous episode is made. When Otuel challenges Charlemagne's court he conveniently uncovers his identity as Vernagu's nephew and thus gives the reasons for his anger. Yet, in spite of being focused on Charlemagne's military career, both narratives appear to be much more concerned with the celebration of the supremacy of Christian faith than with his Spanish campaign. In *Roland and Vernagu*, after having conquered the whole of Spain, Charlemagne is holding his court in Pamplona. A Saracen giant, Vernagu, enters the court uninvited and challenges the king. Since all the *douzepers* fail to defeat him, Roland asks for his chance to face the giant. In a break during the fight, Vernagu asks Roland to instruct him in Christian doctrine as he is impressed by his opponent's courtesy. Notwithstanding Vernagu's apparent interest in the Christian faith, as soon as the fight is resumed, an angel appears to Roland and orders him to kill Vernagu. The giant is inherently wicked and cannot be converted. Roland immediately obeys and slays him.

[95] After a prologue in 12-line tail-rhyme stanzas unique to the Auchinleck version, the text is entirely in couplets. Purdie, *Anglicising Romance,* p. 101.
[96] Melick, 'Charlemagne and the Saracens', p. 178.

Otuel a Kniȝt is the oldest extant text from the Otuel cycle and seems to be based on a straightforward celebration of converting efforts as well as of the prowess of Christian knights.[97] All courtly details presented in the Anglo-Norman *Otinel*, such as Charlemagne's daughter Belisant's arming Otuel, had been removed. *Otuel a Kniȝt* opens with Vernagu's nephew, Otuel, being informed of his uncle's death and carrying a message to Charlemagne's court from the Saracen emperor, Garcy. The emperor threatens Charlemagne to invade his country unless all of them convert. Otuel reveals his identity and challenges Roland to single combat in order to avenge his uncle's death. During a break in the duel, Roland asks Otuel to convert and become one of them. At first Otuel refuses, but when a dove miraculously appears above his helmet, the Saracen warrior does what his uncle could not: he converts. Charlemagne and his knights face Garcy's army and with the help of a newly converted Otuel eventually defeat their opponents. The poem ends with the capture of the Saracen emperor.

Both narratives present features typical of the chronicles about the crusades or of the *chanson de geste,* such as visitations or instances of direct divine intervention. At the beginning of *Roland and Vernagu*, an angel appears to Costaunce and urges him to seek help from Charlemagne. Later in the poem, St James himself appears to Charlemagne thrice and orders him to set off to conquer the whole of Spain. Similar episodes of celestial visitations were typical of the chronicle of the crusades and worked as a means to justify the Christian expeditions in the Holy Land, the Crusades were in fact depicted as divinely sanctioned. Any achievement in the Holy Land was thus perceived as God's will, merely enacted through the Franks.[98] For instance, in 1135, Orderic Vitalis reported that the First Crusade was miraculously inspired by God himself.[99] A Cistercian monk observed that Frederick Barbarossa's involvement in the Third Crusade was a miracle in itself.[100] Narratives of celestial

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[97] Susanna Melick 'Introduction to *Otuel a Kniȝt*' in *The Roland and Otuel Romances and the Anglo-Norman Otinel* edited by Elizabeth Melick, Susanna Greer Fein and David Raybin, *TEAMS Middle English Texts* https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/melick-fein-raybin-general-introduction [accessed on 08/08/2022]

[98] Beth C. Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020, p. 15.
[99] Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*, p. 1.
[100] Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*, p. 15.

messengers instructing the crusaders are numerous. Yet, the accounts of those visions were not considered as mere rhetorical devices aimed at justifying the Crusades, but they could rather exert such a deep influence on the crusaders' spirits to be capable of upturning the outcome of battles. One famous example is the vision that led to the discovery of the Holy Lance in Antioch, during the First Crusade.[101]

In these narratives God's intervention is ubiquitous. God could not only dispatch messengers to give instructions on future moves or miraculously enact conversions, but He could also actively fight on Charlemagne's side. For instance, in *Roland and Vernagu*, when Charlemagne realises that he cannot open a breach in the walls protecting Pamplona, he prays for God's assistance. The city walls immediately crumble.[102]

> 'Lord,' he seyd 'here mi steuen.
> Astow art ful of miȝt,
> Sende me grace þis cite to winne
> & sle þe Sarraȝins herinne
> Þat don oȝain þe riȝt.'
> Þo felle þe walles of þe cite,
> Charls entred wiþ his meyne (ll. 198-204)

A similar instance of God's deliverance can also be detected in *Beues of Hamtoun*, in the episode in which the eponymous hero is held prisoner by King Brademond. As soon as he prays God to help him, his chains break into pieces.

> To Ihesu Crist he bed a bone
> And he him grauntede wel sone;
> So ȝerne he gan to Ihesu speke
> Þat his vetres gonne breke
> And of is medel þe grete ston. (ll. 1645-9)

Christian prayers were perceived as yet another weapon in the hands of the Christians, so much so that in *Roland and Vernagu* they are compared to siege engines.

> Þo preyd Charls to God abone,
> Þat he h[i]m sent grace sone,
> Þe cite for to winne.

[101] In 1098, when the situation of the Christian army in Antioch had become desperate, a Provençal peasant, one Peter Bartholomew reported that he had experienced a series of visions in which St Andrew the Apostle had revealed to him the location of the Holy Lance. Upon its discovery, the Crusader army regained strength and motivation and in a last desperate effort managed to break the siege. Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*, pp. 75-6.

[102] God's direct intervention is another feature of crusading narrative. For instance, a celestial army was reported to have fought on the crusaders' side during the Battle of Antioch, on 28 June 1098. Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*, pp. 75-81.

Þo fel þe walles adoun riȝtes,
King Charls entred wiþ his kniȝtes
Þurth þat ich ginne; (ll. 281-6)

The word ‘ginne’ could in fact mean ‘inventive talent’, ‘strategy’, ‘expedient’, but also ‘siege engine’.[103] In both cases, it is certainly an unusual collocation, as prayers would not normally be associated with weapons or war strategies. The mixture of guile, devotion and personal bravery seems to be a characteristic of the English rendition of the Matter of France. King Richard himself is in fact described in the eponymous poem as a lion in deeds and a leopard in cunning and cleverness, ‘In dede lyoun in þouȝt lepeard’ (l. 461).[104]

One last thought should be given to the description of precious relics. In *Roland and Vernagu*, Charlemagne is reported to have refused the rich recompense offered by Costaunce and asked relics of the Passion of Jesus Christ instead.

Þan brouȝt þai forþ þe holy croun
& þe arme of seyn Simoun
Biforn hem alle þare,
& a parti of þe holy crosse
Þat in a cristal was don in clos,
& Godes cloþeing,
Our leuedi smok þat hye had on,
& þe ȝerd of Araon,
Forþ þai gun bring,
& a spere long & smert
Þat Longys put to Godes hert,
He ȝaf Charls þe king,
& a nail long & gret
Þat was ydriue þurth Godes fet,
Wiþouten ani lesing. (ll. 110-24)

Although at the beginning Charlemagne is sceptical about the nature of the relics, he is soon convinced of their authenticity by their emanating a sweet smell.[105] According to the eleventh-century chronicle *Descriptio Qualiter Karolus Magnus* (written shortly before the announcement of the First

[103] *MED*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED18603/track?counter=1&search_id=18867468 [accessed on 10/07/2022]

[104] ‘A leopard in heraldry can indicate that the first bearer of the arms was born from adultery. Nicholas Upton, a fifteenth century writer on heraldry, said that the “Leopard ys a most cruell beeste engendered wilfully of a Lion and a beeste called a Parde”[…].The arms of Richard the Lion Heart had three gold leopards after 1195, a possible allusion to his grandfather, William the Conqueror, also known as “the Bastard.”’ The Medieval Bestiary, https://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast547.htm [accessed on 03/08/2022]

[105] The sweet smell was universally considered a sign of holiness. At the end of *Guy of Warwick*, the body of the eponymous hero also emanated a sweet smell, ‘Gret honour dede our lord for Gij: | A swete braþe com fram his bodi | Þat last þat day so long | Þat in þis world spices alle | No miȝt cast a swetter smalle | As þen was hem among.’ (ll. 10446-51) *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, edited by Alison Wiggins Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications for TEAMS, 2004, p. 152.

Crusade), Charlemagne assisted the emperor of Constantinople and the patriarch of Jerusalem in a campaign against the Saracen invaders. He then allegedly asked to receive the relics of the Passion instead of worldly gifts: 'eight thorns from the Crown of Thorns, a nail from the Cross, the Holy Shroud, one of Simeon's arms, the clothes of Jesus child and a portion of the True Cross'.[106] Considering the impressive amount of relics that the crusaders looted during the Sack of Constantinople, in 1204, the purpose of these lists might have been that of tracing back their presence in Europe well before the shameful acts committed during the Fourth Crusade.[107]

Amongst the many relics mentioned in *Roland and Vernagu*, the reference to the Crown of Thorns is significant. This precious relic was given to Saint Louis IX by Baldwin II of Constantinople in 1238, in exchange for protection and support.[108] Some of its thorns were given to other European monarchs by the French King himself. As part of the king's treasure, it was certainly perceived by the audience as a powerful symbol of the role played by France as defender of Christianity. Nonetheless, some of the thorns from the Crown of Thorns could also be found in England. King Edward III possessed not only one of these thorns, but also a fragment from the True Cross, known as the Neith Cross.[109] Significantly, one thorn was also held at Glastonbury Abbey, a place strongly connected with the promotion of royal politics.[110]

The relics obtained by Charlemagne are also mentioned in the Auchinleck *Chronicle,* thus possibly establishing yet another connection amongst the texts of this collection. In the *Chronicle*, the Auchinleck redactor reports that the King of France offered to King Æthelstan a series of gifts for the marriage of his sister Eadhild (Lady Ilde in the *Chronicle*). This account seems to have been based on historical truth, as King Æthelstan is reported by chroniclers to have acquired several relics.[111]

Wiche it was ȝe mow now here:

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[106] Stuckey, 'Imagined Crusades', p. 37.
[107] Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*, p. 4.
[108] Jacques Le Goff, *San Luigi (Saint Louis)*, Turin: Einaudi, 1996, pp. 102-7.
[109] Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', pp. 855-6.
[110] John of Glastonbury, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey: An Edition, Translation and Study of John of Glastonbury's* Cronica Sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie, edited by James P. Carley, translated by David Townsend, Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985, pp. 22-5.
[111] Michael Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, edited by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 252.

C. c. c. hundred stedes milke white,
In al þis world nas her like.
Þe bridles wer for þe nones
Ful of precious stones.
ȝete he present him also
Oþer riches mani mo:
Þemperour swerd Costentin,
Þe schawberk was of gold fin,
Þerin was closed a nail gret
Þat was ydriuen þurth Godes fet.
ȝete he present him þe spere
Þat Charlmain was won to bere
Oȝaines Sarraȝines jn bataile.
Mani swore & seyd, saunfaile,
Þat wiþ þat spere smert
Ihesu was stongen to þe hert.
ȝete he present him, ywis,
Þe baner of seyn Moris
Þat he was won to bere
Oȝain þe Sarraȝines here,
& a parti of þe holy crois
In a cristal don inclos,
& þre of þe þornes kene
Þat were in Godes heued y wene,
& a riche croun of gold -
Non richer king wer no schold -
Ymaked wiþin & wiþout
Wiþ precious stones al about.
To make frendes þat wer fon
A better croun nas neuer non
To non erþelich man ywrouȝt
Seþþe þis warld was made of nouȝt. (ll. 1624-58)

William of Malmesbury also provides an account of the gifts the French king allegedly offered to Æthelstan for the marriage of his sister. Jewels of pure light, encrusted with precious stones are supplemented by swift horses, the sword of Constantine the Great and the most valuable relics of all: Charlemagne's spear, the banner of the most blessed martyr Maurice, as well as a piece of the True Cross and the Crown of Thorns enclosed in a crystal case.

Odores aromatum qualia nunquam antea in Anglia visa fuerant: honores gemmarum, praesertim smaragdorum, in quorum viriditate sol repercussus oculos astantium gratiosa luce animaret: equos cursores plurimos, cum phaleris, fulvum (ut Maro ait) 'mandentes sub dentibus aurum:' vas quoddam ex onichino, ita subtili caelatoris arte sculptum, ut vere fluctuare segetes, vere germinare vites, vere moveri hominum imagines viderentur; ita lucidum et politum ut vice speculi vultus intuentium aemularetur: ensem Constantini magni, in quo literis aureis nomen antiqui possessoris legebatur; in capulo quoque super crassas auri laminas clavum ferreum affixum cerneres, unum ex quatuor quos Judaica factio Dominici corporis aptarat supplicio: lanceam Karoli magni, quam imperator invictissimus, contra Saracenos exercitum ducens, siquando in hostem vibrabat, nunquam nisi victor abibat; ferebatur eadem esse quae, Dominico lateri centurionis manu impacta, pretiosi vulneris hiatu Paradisum miseris mortalibus aperuit: vexillum Mauricii beatissimi martyris, et Thebaeae legionis principis, quo idem rex in bello Hispano quamlibet infestos et confertos inimicorum cuneos dirumpere, et in fugam solitus erat cogere: diadema ex auro quidem multo, sed magis gemmis pretiosum, quarum splendor ita in intuentes faculas luminis jaculabatur, ut quanto quis certaret visum intendere, tanto magis reverberatus cogeretur cedere: particulam sanctae et adorandae crucis crystallo inclusam, ubi soliditatem lapidis oculus penetrans potest discernere qualis

> sit ligni color, et quae quantitas: portiunculam quoque coronae spineae, eodem modo inclusam, quam, ad derisionem regni, militaris rabies sacrosancto imposuit capiti. (II.135)[112]

The relics mentioned are certainly connected to the crusading tradition. As specified by William of Malmesbury, Charlemagne's spear was believed to be the same thrusted into the side of Jesus Christ on the Cross, thus the same miraculously retrieved in Antioch during the First Crusade.[113] The detail concerning a crystal reliquary for the piece of the Holy Cross and the Crown of Thorns could offer further insight into the connections between the texts composing the Auchinleck Manuscript. This detail appears in fact to be absent from the main source of *Roland and Vernagu*, namely the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*. It can only be detected in both the Auchinleck *Chronicle* and in one of its sources, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*.[114] Furthermore, since the rhyme used in *Roland and Vernagu,* crosse / in clos, is identical to that used in the *Chronicle*, crois / inclos, it is possible that the Auchinleck redactor drew on the *Chronicle* for this detail.[115]

At the time *Roland and Vernagu* and *Otuel a Kniȝt* were composed, a joined crusade by Philip VI and Edward III might not have been discussed yet, as the French king approached his English counterpart with the idea of a full-scale crusade in the Holy Land only in the autumn of 1331. Nevertheless, in 1330, Edward III offered to join Philip VI in a crusade against the Moors in southern

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[112] '[…] perfumes such as never had been seen in England before: jewels, but more especially emeralds, the greenness of which, reflected by the sun, illumined the countenances of the by-standers with agreeable light: many fleet horses with their trappings, and, as Virgil says, "Champing their golden bits:" an alabaster vase so exquisitely chased, that, the cornfields really seemed to wave, the vines to bud, the figures of men actually to move, and so clear and polished, that it reflected the features like a mirror; the sword of Constantine the Great, on which the name of its original possessor was read in golden letters; on the pommel, upon thick plates of gold, might be seen fixed an iron spike, one of the four which the Jewish faction prepared for the crucifixion of our Lord: the spear of Charles the Great, which whenever that invincible emperor hurled in his expeditions against the Saracens, he always came off conqueror; it was reported to be the same, which, driven into the side of our Saviour by the hand of the centurion, opened, by that precious wound, the joys of paradise to wretched mortals: the banner of the most blessed martyr Maurice, chief of the Theban legion; with which the same king, in the Spanish war, used to break through the battalions of the enemy however fierce and wedged together, and put them to flight: a diadem, precious from its quantity of gold, but more so for its jewels, the splendour of which threw the sparks of light so strongly on the beholders, that the more steadfastly any person endeavoured to gaze, so much the more he was dazzled, and compelled to avert his eyes; part of the holy and adorable cross enclosed in crystal; where the eye, piercing through the substance of the stone, might discern the colour and size of the wood; a small portion of the crown of thorns, enclosed in a similar manner, which, in derision of his government, the madness of the soldiers placed on Christ's sacred head.' William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, pp. 218-9.

[113] Stuckey, 'Imagined Crusades', p. 44.

[114] '& o partiȝe of þe crois . richeliche wiþ al | þat ihc was on ido . yclosed on cristal' (ll. 23-4) Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle*, vol 2, p. 831; Laura Hibbard Loomis, 'The Auchinleck Roland and Vernagu and the Short Chronicle', *Modern Language Notes,* 60 (1945), p. 96.

[115] Loomis, 'The Auchinleck Roland and Vernagu and the Short Chronicle', p. 96.

Spain and, the following year, he also confirmed that he would participate in the Spanish campaign in person.[116] After all, several of Edward III's closest friends, such as William Montagu and Henry of Grossmont, were already involved in the Spanish crusade.[117] Although it is impossible to determine whether these texts were composed in the wake of this renewed crusading effort, it is likely that the political background somehow encouraged the composition of poems celebrating Charlemagne's successful deeds in Spain.[118] Charlemagne's Spanish campaigns might thus have served the double purpose of providing a prestigious antecedent to Edward III's new commitment, as well as giving the English a sense of the history of their faith.[119] Although the texts belonging to the Matter of France are more concerned with the loyalty amongst the members of the Christian army than with the relationships between lords and vassals, their Auchinleck rendition also shows a preoccupation with feudal allegiance. At the end of *Otuel a Kniȝt,* the captured Saracen king Garcy is in fact forced to pay homage to Charlemagne and promise to be at his disposal whenever he needs him.

> 'Sire' he seide 'her is Garsie
> Þat sumtime þratte þe to die;
> He wile nou, ȝif þi wille be,
> Do þe omage and feaute
> And ben at þi comaundement,
> And at eche parlement
> Al redi at þin hond,
> And holden of þe al his lond,
> And for his lond rente ȝiue,
> Wiþ þe noue he mote liue.' (ll. 1729-38)

Once again, the Auchinleck Manuscript proves to have somehow anglicised the issues raised by its sources in order to make them attuned with the concerns of fourteenth-century England.

3.3 An English Charlemagne: *King Richard*

The Middle English romance devoted to King Richard I survives in seven manuscripts from the fourteenth to the fifteenth century and in two printed editions from the sixteenth century. In his 1913 critical edition, Brunner classified these texts into two different redactions: the later and fictionalised

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[116] Ormrod, *Edward IIII*, p. 181.
[117] Ormrod, *Edward IIII*, p. 182.
[118] Melick, 'Charlemagne and the Saracens', p. 173.
[119] Melick, 'Charlemagne and the Saracens', p. 191.

'a' version, in which the deeds performed in the Third Crusade are interspersed with marvels as well as episodes of appalling cruelty, and the shorter and more historically accurate 'b' version.[120] The fragment of *King Richard* contained in the Auchinleck Manuscript belongs to this second tradition and mainly focuses on two major feats of arms performed by King Richard and his army during the Third Crusade: the seizure of Cyprus and the siege of Acre. The latter is certainly considered Richard's greatest achievement, since in *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* it is hailed as the culmination of Richard's military career.

> & seþþe regned king Richard;
> For soþe, as ich vnderstond,
> He wan Acres into his hond,
> & ichil ȝou tel in what maner.
> Listeneþ al þat ben here (ll. 2038-42)

The emphasis on the siege of Acre comes as no surprise, as it was considered the Western reaction to the fall of Jerusalem, which occurred in 1187.[121] After less than one hundred years from its reconquest, Jerusalem, the emotional centre of the Christian world, had been lost to the Saracens.[122] The shock was so great that according to the chronicler Benedict of Peterborough, Pope Urban III died of grief at the news of the Christian defeat at the Battle of Hattin and the consequent fall of Jerusalem.[123] It is equally significant that the Auchinleck version of *King Richard* appears to have

[120] Five manuscripts belong to the 'b' group: Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland Adv. 19.2.1; London, BL Egerton 2862; London, College of Arms HDN 58; Oxford, Bodleian 21802; London, BL Harley 4690. The 'a' version survives in two manuscripts: Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College 175/96 and London, BL Additional 31042. *Richard Coer de Lyon*, edited by Peter Larkin, 'Introduction' https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/larkin-richard-coer-de-lyon-introduction [accessed on 10/02/2022] In the longest and fictionalised a version, two rather unknown Lincolnshire knights are mentioned: Sir Thomas Multon and Sir Ffoulke D'Oyly. Significantly, both appears to be connected to the Beauchamps family. Since their names are not mentioned in any records of the Crusades, one might wonder whether their addition in the later version of *King Richard* might have been prompted by the co-occurrence of this romance with *Guy of Warwick* in the Auchinleck Manuscript. As stressed by John Fynlayson, 'both families were linked by marriage and, by extension, to the Warwicks whose ancestral crusading celebration in Anglo-Norman in the early thirteenth century and in Middle English in the early fourteenth century may have provided a model to the Multon-D'Oylys for the creation of a family legend to rival that of their grander relatives, the Warwicks.' John Finlayson, 'Legendary Ancestors and the Expansion of Romance in *Richard, Coer de Lyon*', *English Studies*, 4 (1998), pp. 300-5.
[121] John Gillingham, *Richard I*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, p. 3.
[122] Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 89.
[123] 'His auditis, dominus papa Urbanus plurimum contristatus, quod haec in diebus suis accidissent, in gravem incidit infirmitatem; qua decoctus infra tertium diem post festum Lucae Evangelistae migravit e saeculo apud Ferrariam, xiii kalendas Octobris. Cui successit, undecimus kalendas Octobris, Albertus cancellarius suus, et vocatus est Gregorius octavus.' Benedict of Peterborough, *The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I A.D. 1169-1192,* vol 2, edited by William Stubbs, London: Longman, 1867, p. 14. [On hearing this, Pope Urban, immensely grieved by what had happened in his time, fell into a serious illness; consumed by it he departed from the world at Ferrara, within the third day after the feast of Luke the Evangelist, on 13 October. He was succeeded by his chancellor Albert, who was called Gregory VIII] (my translation).

been copied some forty years after the fall of Acre, which occurred in 1291. One century after being reconquered by Richard I, Acre, the last Christian stronghold in the East, had been lost forever.

Although the Auchinleck redactor mentions a written source, 'so seyt þe bok', (l. 730), it is unclear whether this text really derives from a now lost Anglo-Norman antecedent.[124] However, the mid-thirteenth-century *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester makes clear reference to a romance about King Richard without mentioning the language in which it was composed, 'Me ne mai noȝt al telle her ac wo so it wole iwite | In romance of him imad me it may finde iwiite' (ll. 9986-7).[125] It might be impossible to determine the exact content of the lost part of the Auchinleck *King Richard*; nonetheless, from the tenor of the extant 1046 lines, as well as from what is reported in *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* it seems unlikely that this redactor had extended his narrative well beyond the first successful operations in the Holy Land.

In the version of *King Richard* contained in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 175/96 (henceforth, Caius College), the text is preceded by a Latin inscription, which reads, 'Hic incipit vita Ricardi Regis primi',[126] thus possibly emphasising that the audience is about to listen to the deeds of the eponymous hero 'from cradle to grave'.[127] The Auchinleck *King Richard* conversely seems to offer a narrower focus, as the text is preceded by an English rubric, which simply reads 'King Richard'. Unlike many 'romances of prys', such as *Guy of Warwick*,[128] the Auchinleck *King Richard* does not begin with the narration of a family history or with the birth of the hero, but rather with his birth as a crusader.[129] Therefore, the traits of his personality seem to have been meticulously

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[124] Several scholars have hypothesised the presence of an Anglo-Norman antecedent. Laura Hibbard Loomis*, Mediæval Romance in England: A Study of the Sources and Analogues of the Noncyclic Metrical Romances*, New York: B. Franklin, 1963, pp. 148-9; Rosalind Field, 'Patterns of Availability and Demand in Middle English Translations *de romanz*', in *The Exploitation of Medieval Romance*, edited by Laura Ashe, Ivana Djordjević and Judith Weiss, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010, p. 83.
[125] Fisher, *Vernacular Historiography*, pp. 345; 348. Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle*, vol 2, p. 694.
[126] *Richard Coer de Lyon*, edited by Peter Larkin, TEAMS Middle English Texts https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/larkin-richard-coer-de-lyon [consulted on 13/03/2022]
[127] Burrow, *Medieval Writers and Their Work*, p. 74.
[128] 'Men Speken of romances of prys, | Of Horn child and of Ypotys, | Of Beves and sir Gy' Chaucer's Sir Thopas quoted by Burrow, *Medieval Writers and Their Work*, p. 74. Bradford B. Broughton emphasises the extent to which the 'a' redaction of *King Richard* is closer to romance than to *chanson de geste* and thus the account of Richard's life starts with his family's history. Bradford B. Broughton, *The Legends of King Richard I Coeur de Lion. A Study of Sources and Variations to the Year 1600,* Paris: Mouton, 1966, pp. 45-6.
[129] Libbon, *Mediæval Romance in England,* p. 148.

calculated to meet the requirements not only of a chivalric hero of medieval romance, but also of the champion of Christianity. Furthermore, although at the turn of the fourteenth century the realm of King Richard I might have been considered a leap back to 'time immemorial', as his coronation, in 1189, was set as the limit of legal memory in estate controversies, his renown had never faded.[130] He was taken to be a model to emulate for all subsequent kings, so much so that, in the *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, the author celebrates the birth of future Edward III by wishing him to match Richard I's bravery, 'Regis Ricardi [sectetur] notam probitatem'.[131]

Before the Third Crusade, the English aristocracy appears to have shown little interest in the Crusade ideal; however, King Richard's commitment to bringing the Holy Land back to Christianity literally forged the English chivalric imagination.[132] As stressed by Nigel Saul, taking the cross was henceforth considered not only as an act of bravery and penance, but also as 'a uniquely ennobling form of war which could bring honour and distinction to a whole family'.[133] Richard I took the Cross in 1188 when he still was a prince, but when he managed to set off, he had become the first English King to lead a Crusade alongside the King of France.[134] Therefore, it comes as no surprise that right from the beginning of the Auchinleck prologue to *King Richard*, the king's name is not only raised to the rank of the greatest, but his deeds are equated to those performed by the champions of the Matter of France: Charlemagne, Roland and Oliver.[135]

Romaunce make folk of Fraunce
Of kniȝtes þat were in destaunce
Þat dyed þurth dint of sward:
Of Rouland & of Oliuer
& of þe oþer dusseper,

[130] Prestwich, *Edward I*, pp. 259-60.
[131] 'May he follow the well-known valour of King Richard.' *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, pp. 62-3.
[132] Nigel Saul, *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England 1066-1500*, London: The Boydell Head, 2011, p. 225. Nevertheless, it might be worth considering that the highest-ranking leader of the First Crusade was not Godfrey of Bouillon, but rather the eldest son of William the Conqueror, Robert Curthose. His deeds during the First Crusade earned him great renown. Heng, 'Jews, Saracens, "Black Men" and Tartars', p. 256; William M. Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, c. 1050-1134*, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008, pp. 153-90.
[133] Saul, *For Honour and Fame*, p. 226.
[134] Broughton, *The Legends of King Richard I Coeur de Lion*, pp. 18-9.
[135] 'The Nine Worthies became a popular convention in literature and art during the fourteenth century, and found early patronage at the court of the young Edward III. In 1332, Edward's young wife would present him with a spectacular silver cup and ewer decorated with images of the Worthies, including Charlemagne, Arthur, Roland, Oliver, Gawain, and Lancelot.' W. Ormrod, *Edward III*, p. 15. It might be worth noticing that apart from Lancelot – who is depicted as a controversial character also in the Auchinleck *Chronicle* – all of them are mentioned in the Auchinleck prologue to *King Richard*.

Of Alisander & Charlmeyn
& Ector þe gret werrer
& of Danys le fiz Oger,
Of Arthour & of Gaweyn. (ll. 10-8)

This prologue, unique to the Auchinleck redaction, appears to draw not only on the tradition of the Nine Worthies, as Hector, Arthur, Alexander, and Charlemagne are all mentioned, but also on the repertoire of the heroes of the *chanson de geste*, as Roland, Olivier, and Ogier de Dane find their righteous place in such an illustrious company. In the eyes of the twelfth-century Norman chronicler Ambroise as well as in those of the Auchinleck redactor, King Richard did not walk in the shadow of his illustrious ancestors, but he was rather one of them. 'Richarz li maines' (l. 11238) thus became the English answer to Charlemagne.[136] The Auchinleck redactor seems to imply that a poem of pure English origin could match the longstanding epic genre of the Matter of France also in terms of literary achievements.

Nonetheless, there is no trace of the hero-king of the First Crusade, Godfrey de Bouillon, in this list of exemplary knights, as though Richard could function as his replacement. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the First and the Third Crusade might have been perceived as somehow connected in terms of shared imagery. Not only did the Third Crusade almost achieve its objectives, but it was also characterised by a leading figure, King Richard, who could match Godfrey of Bouillon in terms of heroic deeds. Godfrey earned everlasting fame for his feats of arms at the siege of Antioch (in 1098) as much as Richard earned his at the siege of Acre. These two military enterprises appear to have been associated in the audience's minds, so much so that Henry III had the Antioch Chamber at Clarendon Palace painted with the reputed single combat between Richard I and the Saladin,[137] as though the Siege of Acre could be considered a re-enactment of the Siege of Antioch. Furthermore, both Godfrey of Bouillon and King Richard were celebrated for their almost superhuman strength, though in *Roland and Vernagu,* Charlemagne as well is praised for his might, 'Charles þe king | Þat

[136] Ambroise, *L'Estoire de la Guerre Sainte,* p. 302.
[137] Marisa Libbon, 'The Invention of King Richard', in *The Auchinleck Manuscript: New Perspectives*, edited by Susanna Fein, York: York Medieval Press, 2018, p. 128. The first extant account of this reputed duel between King Richard and the Saladin can be retrieved in Pierre de Langtoft's *Chronicle*, Pierre de Langtoft, *Chronicle*, vol 2, pp. 102-3.

michel was of miȝt' (ll. 426-7). A twelfth-century short narrative about Godfrey of Bouillon narrates that during the Siege of Antioch he bisected a Saracen soldier armour and all.[138] His famous exploit took place when Godfrey came to the rescue of his fellow crusaders who had been attacked by a Saracen patrol while scouting the surrounding area in search of food supplies.[139] This episode is reported by William of Tyre as a 'factum tam mirabile' (Book 5, Chapter 6): a marvel in itself.[140]

Although micronarratives in which a Christian knight severs a Saracen opponent were a typical feature of the genre of the *chanson de geste*, the insistence on Richard's strength might convey additional meaning.[141] In the Auchinleck account, Richard allegedly wielded a twenty-pound iron axe forged for the sole purpose of being used against the Saracens.[142] However, Richard's axe is reported to have served him well before his reaching the Holy Land. On their way to Acre, several English vessels were shipwrecked on the Cyprus shores and their occupants were imprisoned by order of the Emperor of Cyprus. King Richard eventually managed to reach the isle, but as soon as he landed, he was informed of the disgraceful fate suffered by his companions. The King's retaliation was swift and fierce. He rushed towards the Cypriot dungeons in order to rescue his fellow crusaders and smashed the prison bars with a single stroke of his axe.

> Hadde don made an ax for þe nones
> For to cleue Sarraȝins bones.
> Þe heued was wrouȝt wonder wel,
> Þeron was tventi pounde of stiel
> & þo he com into Cipre lond
> Þilk ax he tok in his hond,
> Al þat he hit he tofraped.
> Þe Griffoun so was fast ascaped
> Ac naþeles mani he tocleued
> Þat her vnþankes þer bileued,
> & þe prisoun þo he com to
> Wiþ his ax he smot atvo
> Dores & barres & iren cheynes
> & deliuerd his men out of peynes. (ll. 478-91)

[138] Simon John, '"Claruit Ibi Multum Dux Lotharingiae": The Development of the Epic Tradition of Godfrey of Bouillon and the Bisected Muslim', *Literature of the Crusades*, edited by Simon Thomas Parsons and Linda M. Paterson, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2018, pp. 7-8.
[139] John, '"Claruit Ibi Multum Dux Lotharingiae"', p. 9.
[140] John, '"Claruit Ibi Multum Dux Lotharingiae"', pp. 14-5.
[141] John, '"Claruit Ibi Multum Dux Lotharingiae"', p. 18.
[142] In the Bayeux Tapestry, both armies as well as their leaders are depicted while wielding axes rather than swords, thus possibly implying that the portrait of King Richard simultaneously drew on two different traditions. Geraldine Heng, 'The Romance of England. Richard Coeur de Lyon, Saracens, Jews, and the Politics of Race and Nation', in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, New York: Palgrave, 2001, p. 152.

Byzantine Greeks shared the Christian faith; nevertheless, Richard's use of his crusade-forged axe against them as well makes them disturbingly similar to the Saracens. Since the First Crusade, the Greeks had been vilified for having deserted their fellow crusaders at the Siege of Antioch. They were supposed to provide military help to the Christian contingent besieged in Antioch, but after having been persuaded by Henry-Stephen count of Blois of the hopelessness of the crusaders' situation, the army of the Byzantine emperor Alexius I Komnenus simply withdrew.[143] However, there might also have been other reasons. In an attempt to find a justification for the shameful behaviour of the Crusader army during the Sack of Constantinople, in 1204, later redactors might have tried to sketch a vicious portrait of the Greeks.[144]

> [Þ]e ax he held an hond ydrawe,
> [M]ani Griffoun he haþ yslawe. (ll. 558-9)

Interestingly enough, in the Auchinleck poem, Richard is never represented wielding a sword. The only instances of the word 'swerde' refer to the English army in general, 'þe Inglische hem defended wele | Wiþ gode swerde of broun stiel' (ll. 321-2); 'Wiþ her swerdes adoun þai hewe' (l. 894). During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the axe was considered such a respectable weapon that it could also be part of knights' and kings' equipment.[145] Nonetheless, Richard's exclusively wielding an axe, rather than a sword, the knightly weapon *par excellence*, might somehow be unexpected and all the more so if one considers that, according to the twelfth-century English chronicler Roger of Hoveden, the King allegedly took Excalibur with him on Crusade.[146] The chronicler also reports that Richard had disposed of Arthur's sword well before his arrival in the Holy Land having given it to Tancred in return for gold, silver, bolts of silk and vessels. Richard thus gave Tancred the 'gladium optimum Arcturi nobilis quondam regis Britonum, quem Britones vocaverunt

[143] Asbridge, *The Crusades*, pp. 74-5.
[144] This aspect will be explored in the following section.
[145] R. Ewart Oakeshott, *The Archeology of Weapons,* New York: Dover Publications, 2018, p. 257.
[146] Broughton, *The Legends of King Richard I Coeur de Lion*, p. 98.

Caliburnum'.[147] The marriage of one of Tancred's daughters to Richard's nephew was also part of the agreement. The three-year-old Arthur, Count of Brittany, was the son of Richard's brother Geoffrey. In due time, the legendary sword would thus be once again wielded by an Arthur.[148] Although neither the Auchinleck nor the Caius College version reports it, at the beginning of the fourteenth century this story circulated widely. For instance, in his early fourteenth-century *Chronicle*, Peter of Langtoft emphatically states that Richard gave Tancred 'the best sword that ever was forged'.[149]

Peter Langtoft's also appears to be the first extant chronicle in which the story of Guy of Warwick is associated with Æthelstan's reign.[150] Although Guy of Warwick's deeds are not reported in its main sources, namely the chronicles of Robert of Gloucester and William of Malmesbury, the Auchinleck *Chronicle* devotes some ten lines to the struggle between the English hero and the giant Colbrond.[151] This addition might possibly have been inspired by the romances about Guy of Warwick and his son, also a part of the Auchinleck Manuscript. Nonetheless, the addition of the deeds of the legendary hero might give way to the possibility that Peter Langtoft's *Chronicle* was amongst the sources used for the Auchinleck version of the *Liber Regum Angliae*. Therefore, the Auchinleck redactor might have deliberately avoided any mention of Excalibur in the *Chronicle* as well, though contained in one of his sources. This omission might somehow be unexpected, as the presence of Arthur's sword would not only have recreated the intertextuality typical of the Auchinleck Manuscript by connecting this

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[147] 'The finest sword of Arthur, once the noble king of Britain, which the Britons call Excalibur.' *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi: The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I, A.D. 1169–1192: Known Commonly under the Name of Benedict of Peterborough,* vol 2, edited by W. Stubbs, London: Longmans, 1867, p. 159.

[148] Richard Barber, 'Arthurian Swords I: Gawain's Sword and the Legend of Weland the Smith', in *Arthurian Literature XXXV*, edited by Elizabeth Archibald and David F. Johnson, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2019, p. 15.

[149] 'Le ray Richard saunz plus à ly ad redones | La meyllur espeye ke unkes fu forgez, | Ço fu Kaliburne, dount Arthur le senez | [Sei] solait guyer en gueres et [en] mellez.' [King Richard without more has given him in return | The best sword that ever was forged; | That was Caliburn, with which Arthur the wise | Used to guide himself in wars and in battles.] Pierre de Langtoft, *Chronicle,* vol 2, edited and translated by Thomas Wright, London: Longmans, 1868, pp. 48-9.

[150] 'Ke al matyn troverayt un velz palmer et lent, | A la porte del seu, et cely seurement | Parfrait la bataille, pur Deu omnipotent, | Si pur Deu ly priast; ço fu verrayment | Guy de Warwik, sun livre dist coment | Il tuayt Colebrand, par quai tut quitement. | Anlaphe rethorna à cel fez dolent.' [In the morning he would find a palmer old and slow, | At the south gate, and he assuredly | Would perform the battle, for God Almighty, | If he prayed him for God's sake; this was truly | Guy of Warwick, his book tells how | He slew Colebrand, whereby all quit. | Anlaf returned that time in sorrow.] Pierre de Langtoft, *Chronicle,* vol 1, pp. 332-3.

[151] Velma Bourgeois Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*, New York & London: Garland, 1996, p. 71. This topic will be further explored in Chapter 4.

text with another poem from the collection, *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, but it would also have provided the English King with a sword comparable to Roland's Durendal. One possible explanation might be found in the poems of the Matter of France presented in the Auchinleck Manuscript. Although Charlemagne's sword, Joyeuse, was already extremely popular, no mention of it is made in either *Roland and Vernagu* or *Otuel a Kniȝt*. The only swords mentioned by name are Otuel's Corsose, 'Corsouse m[i swerde]' (l. 131)[152] and Roland's Durendal, 'Al þe while þat Roulond | Mai bere Durendal in his hond' (ll. 1523-4). Therefore, the exclusion of Excalibur might have been prompted by the desire to maintain as close a resemblance as possible between the descriptions of the two kings.

Richard's exclusive use of the battle-axe is further emphasised in the scene describing his spectacular arrival in the city of Acre. The king is depicted as standing at the bow of his ship, holding the axe whereby he is about to cut the chain protecting the city from sea attacks.

> Our king was warned bi a spie
> Hou þat þe folk of heþen lawe
> A wel gret cheyn þai had don drawe
> Ouer þe hauen of Acres fers
> & was yfastned in to pilers
> Þat no schip schuld in winne
> No þai nouȝt out þat were wiþinne. (ll. 714-20)

The Auchinleck redactor hyperbolically describes the moment in which Richard's axe clashes against the city's defences. His blow is so powerful that it causes the chain to break into three pieces.

> & king Richard þat was so gode
> Wiþ his ax afor schippe stode
> & whan he com ouer þe cheyne
> He smot a strok wiþ miȝt & mayn.
> Þe cheyne he smot on peces þre
> & boþe endes fel doun in þe se. (ll. 739-44)

A similar description is also provided by the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*: 'Ac first he [King Richard] smot a dint wel strong | Wiþ his ax a cheyne of þre' (ll. 2138-9). However powerful Richard's stroke might have been, it could hardly have caused the chain to break into three pieces. If on the one hand, this might be considered an instance of hyperbolic inaccuracy on the redactor's part, on the other, it might be yet another way to emphasise Richard's extraordinary strength.

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[152] Otuel's sword seems to hold centre stage as it is mentioned additional four times in *Otuel a Kniȝt*.

Richard also made good use of the weapons seized from a captured Saracen ship and in almost biblical fashion set fire to sky and sea. Nonetheless, since the Auchinleck redactor has previously clarified that King Richard used Greek fire, his coming does not appear to be entirely interpretable as a marvel in the strictest sense. It seems rather yet another astute use of the weapons at the king's disposal.

> Þo king Richard out of his galye
> Kast wilde fire into þe sky
> & fer Gregeys into þe see
> As al o fer weren he. (ll. 751-4)

The terrifying effect of Richard's coming is consistent with the account provided by the twelfth-century Kurdish biographer of the Saladin, Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn Shaddād. In his view, 'He [Richard] was wise and experienced in warfare and his coming had a dread and frightening effect on the hearts of the Muslims'.[153] By contrast, the Caius College version appears to reinforce the impression of an almost supernatural event by reporting the comments of the Acre garrison at the appearance of King Richard's ship: they thought it was the devil himself entering their city, 'And sayd he was the devyll of hell, | That was come them to quell' (ll. 2678-9). Since in the Caius College redaction Richard is described as the offspring of a devilish mother, this remark might somehow come as no surprise. However, in the Auchinleck *Chronicle,* this same couplet is used to describe the Saracens' shock at the sight of King Richard's coming, 'For þis is þe deuel of helle | Þat wil ous euerichon aquelle' (ll. 2119-20). As both the Auchinleck *Chronicle* and *King Richard* were copied by the same scribe, one might wonder why the Saracens' reputed comment on the king's arrival is absent from the romance devoted to him. Although it is impossible to determine whether the account of Richard's devilish mother reported at length in the Caius College Manuscript was also in the source used for the Auchinleck redaction, by the beginning of the fourteenth century this legend circulated widely.[154]

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[153] Bahā' al-Dīn Ibn Shaddād, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin or al-Nawādir al-Sulṭāniyya wa'l-Maḥāsin al-Yūsufiyya*, translated by D. S. Richards, London and New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 150.

[154] An early instance of this legend can be found in Gerald of Wales's *De Principis Instructione,* a Latin work written during Richard's lifetime. Broughton, *The Legends of King Richard I Coeur de Lion*, p. 41. As stressed by Peter Sigurdson Lunga, this tale was probably invented by Gerald of Wales, though in the account of the thirteenth century chronicler, the devilish mother is not Eleonore of Aquitaine, but rather an unidentified Countess of Anjou. Peter Sigurdson Lunga,'

Furthermore, the connection between kings and fiends is certainly not unprecedented. In the Auchinleck *Chronicle*, two English kings, Hengist and Bladud, are reported to have entertained some relations with the 'fendes of helle' (l. 740). Therefore, the Auchinleck redactor might one again have deliberately avoided any devilish reference to remain as close as possible to the literary image of Charlemagne.

Superhuman strength is not the sole feature reminiscent of the genre of the *chanson de geste*. Richard's ebullient temperament seems to match the customary staging of extreme emotions typical of epic poetry. An analysis of the concordances of the *Chanson de Roland* reveals that both anger and grief enjoy great prominence in the text.[155] If on the one hand anger was certainly not a virtue, on the other it was considered part of the traditional repertoire of kings' reactions.[156] According to the Christian faith, rulers should be mild, merciful, and patient. And yet, a king should also be respected and feared in order to rule effectively.[157] Therefore, when his or his country's honour is insulted or threatened, the king should show his indignation and anger in order to have his reputation preserved.[158] The king thus demonstrates his resoluteness to go to war by indignation and outbursts of anger and his meekness and compassion by tears.[159] King Richard himself is reported to have burst into tears when he heard the bishop of Pisa's account of the hardship suffered by the Christian army at Acre: 'King Richard wepe wiþ eyȝen boþe' (l. 975). However, a distinction should be made between wrath – *ira* – and rage – *furor*. There were specific conventions about the appropriate display of emotions, so much so that nobles were harshly criticised for showing excessive anger.[160] As the

Queens and Demons: Women in English Royal Genealogies, c. 1100–c. 1223', in *Conquests in Eleventh-Century England: 1016, 1066*, edited by Laura Ashe and Emily Joan Ward, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020, pp. 238-9.

[155] Curucus / Curuciez (3 + 1) [irascible; to anger, to become angry]; Doel(s) / Dolent(z) / Dolor /dolur (31+1+8+2+1) [suffering]; Esrages (1) [to become angry]; Ire / Ireement / Irur (11+3+6) [rage, fury]; Maltalant / Maltalentifs (2+1) [angry reaction]; Mortel rage (2) [mortal rage]. Joseph J. Duggan, *A Concordance of the Chanson de Roland*, Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1969, pp. 71; 96;141; 185-6; 240; 316. *DMF,* http://zeus.atilf.fr/dmf/ [accessed on 23/02/2022] Stephen D. White, 'The Politics of Anger', in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998, p. 132.

[156] Gerd Althoff, '*Ira Regis*: Prolegomena to a History of Royal Anger', in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998, p. 60.

[157] Althoff, '*Ira Regis*', p. 61.

[158] White, 'The Politics of Anger', p. 143.

[159] Althoff, '*Ira Regis*', p. 74.

[160] White, 'The Politics of Anger', p. 138.

mesure was considered a crucial virtue in the courtly environment, its opposite, the *demesure,* could only be perceived as an obscure force threatening the harmony of the court. Anger could thus be acceptable only in so far as it was directed towards one's or someone else's sins and could thus be transformed into *bona ira*.[161] The Crusaders' anger is described as unambiguously righteous, as it stems from the desire for just revenge against those who are believed to be God's enemies.[162] Although Richard's anger appears to be as exaggerated as his strength, it is precisely its being directed towards the Saracens that makes it appropriate, somehow similar to the divine wrath unleashed in the Old Testament.

> Richard was wroþ & peched mod
> & loked as he wer wode.
> Þe table wiþ his fot he smot
> Þat it fel on þe flore fot-hot (ll. 221-4)
>
> King Richard wex wel wroþ (l. 360)

In *Otuel a Kniȝt* Charlemagne's indignation at Otuel's words is also described in terms of wrath, 'King Charle[s] gan to meuen his blod'. However, unlike King Richard, the Carolingian king manages to restrain himself and Otuel is allowed to go unharmed, 'Bot naþeles he was hende & good | And nolde for hise wordes heȝe | Don Otuel no vileinie' (ll. 356-8). Significantly, this emphasis on Charlemagne's demeanour appears to be new to the Auchinleck redaction, as these lines are absent from its direct source, the Anglo-Norman *Otinel*.[163] Although wrath is admittedly part of the kings' emotional repertoire and thus somehow customary, the prominence it is given in both texts might be interpreted as yet another attempt to construct similar portraits of the two monarchs. At times the king's reaction is also triggered by unflattering comments on his or his subjects' physical features. Just as King Richard wants to show the French and Greeks how fierce and vindicative the *taylard* English can be, so Charlemagne teaches Clarel that in spite of his old age, he has not lost the sense

[161] Paul Hyams, 'What Did Henry III of England Think in Bed and in French about Kingship and Anger?', in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998, p. 106.
[162] Stephen J. Spencer, 'Emotions and the "Other": Emotional Characterisation of Muslims Protagonists in Narrative of the Crusades (1095-1192)', in *Literature of the Crusades*, edited by Simon Thomas Parsons and Linda M. Paterson, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2018, p. 45.
[163] Susanna Greer Fein, David Raybin, 'Introduction to the Anglo-Norman *Otinel*' in *The Roland and Otuel Romances and the Anglo-Norman Otinel* edited by Elizabeth Melick, Susanna Greer Fein and David Raybin, *TEAMS Middle English Texts* https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/fein-raybin-anglo-norman-otinel [accessed on 08/08/2022]

of his royal dignity, 'King Charles waryþede anonriȝt' (l. 1231) and 'King Charles swor his oþ | And bigan to wexe wroþ' (ll. 1249-50).

In the Anglo-Norman *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, *furor* is used to describe the wrath of the Saladin and his troops and only rarely that of Richard. This comes as no surprise, as *furor* is a symbol of their opposition to Christianity and is thus juxtaposed to the divinely ordained wrath of the Crusaders.[164] *Furor* also entails the idea of bestiality, so much so that the wrath of the emperor of Cyprus is described in animalistic terms. He grinds his teeth and starts breathing heavily like a wild beast, 'þemperour bigan to rage | He grent wiþ þe teþ & hard blewe' (ll. 383-4). Significantly, in the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum, furor* is used to describe Philip Augustus's rage as well, thus making the French King disturbingly similar to the Saracens.[165]

The idea of just revenge should not be solely intended to be directed towards the Saracens, but also to anyone standing in Richard's way or insulting his army.[166] The Auchinleck redaction reports that the English troops were verbally and physically attacked by Greek and French soldiers while camping outside Messina. Richard I, as the very embodiment of the ideal king, stood by his soldiers and swore he would never rest again until he had avenged his fellow crusaders, 'Joie ne comeþ þer neuer to me | Til ich of hem awreken be' (ll. 277-8).

In the Auchinleck *King Richard* an additional instance of Richard's fierceness – absent from the Caius College version – is reported. After leaving Cyprus, Richard becomes so impatient to reach Acre that he threatens to kill his own sailors if they fail to give speed to his ship, '& seyd who so

[164] Spencer, 'Emotions and the "Other"', pp. 40; 45.
[165] Spencer, 'Emotions and the "Other"', p. 47. As stressed by Nicola Royan, King Philip becomes the embodiment of Richard's opposite: 'a leader susceptible to bribery; one distracted from the main task in hand; one vulnerable to pride. He is thus more dangerous than the Saracens, for he is a perversion of knightly qualities and a more direct threat to English identity.' Nicola Royan, 'A Question of Truth: Barbour's *Bruce*, Hary's *Wallace* and *Richard Coer de Lion*', *The International Review of Scottish Studies*, 34 (2009), p. 85.
[166] Susanna Throop analyses the consequences of failing to pursue just revenge in a crusading context. Albert of Aachen in his *Historia Ierosolimitana* provides an account of the tragic fate suffered by one of Godfrey of Bouillon's knights. During the assault to Jerusalem's walls, in 1099, Gerard of Avesnes, was taken prisoner and crucified by the Saracen army. While dying he asked Godfrey of Bouillon to avenge his death. The Christian leader conversely left him to his fate and continued the assault on the city's walls. The attack resulted in a complete failure. The defeat of the Christian army could only be interpreted as God's disfavour for Godfrey of Bouillon's refusal to avenge the death of a Christian and fellow Crusader. Throop, Susanna A., 'Acts of Vengeance, Acts of Love: Crusading Violence in the Twelfth Century, in *War and Literature*, edited by Laura Ashe and Ian Patterson, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014, pp. 3-20.

feynteþ at þis nede | On iuel deþ be he dede' (ll. 735-6). Since the Caius College version of the romance is pervaded by lengthy descriptions of Richard's fierceness and sense of revenge, such as his reputed acts of cannibalism, as well as his ripping out a lion's heart, one might wonder why these lines are not reported. In the selected couplet, the king's 'sense of justice' is directed towards his loyal companions and thus possibly appears to go beyond the limits of appropriate anger. These lines appear somehow faithful to the historical portrait of King Richard, who had such a strong sense of the justness of his cause, that he was ready to take revenge on anyone hindering his path, even his own kin.[167] Nonetheless, it does not seem to conform to the model provided by the literary figure of Charlemagne. King Richard might thus have been conceived as even stronger and fiercer, an empowered version of Charlemagne.

Chansons de geste were also politically engaged, as they dealt with contemporary concerns, such as the relationship between lord and vassal as well as the preoccupation with the unity of the Christian army.[168] As for the former, the repeated emphasis on feudal relationships, such as the homage paid by the defeated emperor of Cyprus, 'he [the emperor] dede omage to king Richard' (l. 666) might mirror the complex political situation of the English king's continental domains. As for the latter, the continuous treacheries perpetrated by the King of France in the Auchinleck narrative can all too well demonstrate the extent to which quarrels within the Christian army could undermine the common purpose of bringing the Holy Land back to Christianity. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, both themes might have been perceived as extremely relevant, as the negotiations between Edward III and Philipp VI for a last crusade were at a critical point.[169]

Although superhuman strength as well as almost divine-ordained wrath seem to move the Auchinleck *King Richard* from the genre of the romance to that of the *chanson de geste*, episodes of

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[167] For a detailed account of Richard I's personality, see Gillingham, *Richard I*, Chapter 14, 'The Character of a Lionheart', pp. 254-68.
[168] Marianne Ailes, 'The Chanson de Geste' in *The Cambridge Companion of the Crusades*, edited by Anthony Bale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, p. 35.
[169] By 1334, the negotiations on a new Crusade had definitely collapsed and each king held the other responsible for having prevented the rescue of the Holy Land. Ormrod, *Edward III*, pp. 181-3.

celestial visitations and divine intervention seem to have been carefully excluded. As stressed in the previous section, the miraculous was a common feature of crusading literature. Nonetheless, in the eyes of the twelfth-century chronicler William of Tyre a distinction should be made. Chronicles and *chansons de geste* were definitely not romances and thus the miraculous should not be confused with the marvellous. In his description of the seizure of Jerusalem, in 1099 he hastens to clarify that the city was taken 'miracuolose magis quam mirabiliter' (miraculously rather than marvellously).[170] A miracle was in fact an instance of divine intervention, whereas a marvel was simply something that could not be explained.[171] Given the distinction drawn by William of Tyre, any account of miraculous apparition would not impact on the historical plausibility of the narrative. The account of the Third Crusade was no different and had its own episodes of divine intervention. According to the twelfth-century chronicler Roger of Howden, on 6 May 1190 a storm dispersed Richard's fleet on its way to Lisbon shortly after it had left Dartmouth. In the midst of the tempest, Thomas Becket appeared to the fleet on three separate occasions and reassured the crusaders about his assistance. The Saint also added that God had appointed him alongside St Edmund and St Nicholas to be the guardians of the expedition.[172] Although this account seems entirely appropriate to the Auchinleck context, as it would be consistent with the prominence given especially to St Edmund in the *Chronicle*, no mention of it is made either in the Auchinleck *King Richard* or in the *Chronicle*. The Auchinleck redactor's decision to omit this episode might have been inspired by a desire for synthesis or by its absence from its source. Nonetheless, this redactor might have also decided to avoid any mention of the Saint who had allegedly been killed at Richard's father's order.[173]

If *King Richard* was meant to be a *chanson de geste*, then it would be so in the English way. This English epic poem appears in fact to resist any classification as well as encompassing them all: it simultaneously retains the features of a chronicle, of a romance, as well as of a *chanson de geste*. As

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[170] Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*, p. 16.
[171] Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*, p. 20.
[172] Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*, p. 89.
[173] Roger of Howden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene Vol III*, edited by William Stubbs, London: Longman, 1870, pp. 42-3.

stated in the prologue, King Richard appears not only to provide England with its own epic, 'King Richard, þe werrour best | Þat men findeþ in ani gest' (ll. 31-2), but also to enable the emergence of a sense of national identity. As stressed by Laura Libbon, the Auchinleck redactor repeatedly refers to King Richard as 'our king', 'a determiner that presumed shared cultural memory and implies collective nostalgic possession.'[174]

> Our king þat day for no nede
> In batail no miȝt nouȝt spede. (ll. 251-2)
>
> Now herkneþ of Richard our king (l. 295)
>
> Our king was warned bi a spie (l. 714)

The poem also contains one of the oldest extant vernacular attestations of the word 'nation',[175] thus possibly implying that it was the instrumentalization of the French traitorous plans and alliance with the Byzantine Greeks of Messina that shaped England as a nation.[176] The anonymous author of the thirteenth-century *Cursor Mundi*, not only defines England as a 'nation', but he also establishes a specific criterion of identity: the use of a shared language.

> Of ingland þe nacione
> Er englijs men in comune,
> þe speche þat men may mast wid spede
> Mast to speke þar-wid war nede;
> Seldom was for ani chance
> Englis tong preched in france,
> Gif we þaim ilkan þair language,
> And þan do we na vtetrage. (ll. 241-8)[177]

However, if in the Auchinleck *King Richard* it is the Franco-Greek alliance that allows the emergence of England as a nation, in fourteenth century England it was the Franco-Scottish alliance that elicited feelings of national identity in England. The French support to the Scottish cause had exacerbated the already strained Anglo-French relations to such an extent that only a few years later this escalated into the Hundred Years' War.

> Alle we schul ous venge fonde

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[174] Marisa Libbon, *Talk and Textual Production in Medieval England*, Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2021, p. 13.
[175] *MED*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED29003/track?counter=1&search_id=13158614 [accessed on 23/02/2022]
[176] Libbon, *Talk and Textual Production in Medieval England,* p. 170.
[177] *Cursor Mundi (The Cursur of the World) a Northumbrian Poem of the Fourteenth Century in Four Versions*, edited by Richard Morris, London: Trübner, 1874, p. 23. Heng, 'The Romance of England. Richard Coeur de Lyon', p. 151.

> Wiþ queyntise & wiþ strengþe of hond
> Of þe Freyns & of þe Griffouns
> Þat haue despised our naciouns. (ll. 261-4)

The threats faced by Richard's army in Messina seem to have been carefully staged in order to raise indignation and consequent nationalistic feelings in the audience. Furthermore, the French unfair treatment of the English army is perceived as even more outrageous as they were fellow crusaders and thus committed to the defeat of a common enemy.

One last thought should be given to the list of the barons who allegedly joined King Richard in leading the assault against the Greeks and the French in Messina.

> Biforn went þe king Richard;
> Þerl of Salesbirie afterward
> Þat was ycleped bi þat day
> Sir William þe long spay;
> Þerl of Leicester & of Herford
> Swetelich suwed her lord (ll. 231-4)

William Longespée, third Earl of Salisbury, was one of Henry II's illegitimate sons, thus half-brother to Richard I. His presence in the Third Crusade is not recorded. Nonetheless, he was close to the king as he assisted him in his military campaign in Normandy from 1196 to 1198.[178] The confusion might have arisen from the participation of his oldest son William Longespée II in the Seventh Crusade. This William enjoyed a great crusading reputation in England as he was reported to have died almost a martyr at the Battle of Mansurah, in 1250.[179] Lloyd also points out that the redactor of *King Richard* might have confused the Egyptian city of Mansurah, or 'Massura' as it was sometimes rendered in medieval sources, with Messina.[180] However, legends surrounding his last stand against the Saracens started circulating shortly after his death and took a written form in the eponymous Anglo-Norman epic poem *Guillaume Longespee*.[181] The sole extant manuscript containing this poem dates back to 1300-1325, though the text is believed to have been composed shortly after the events narrated.[182]

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[178] *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/ [accessed on 10/07/2022]
[179] R. M. Wadsworth, 'Historical Romance in England: Studies in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Romance' (unpublished PhD Thesis, York, 1972), pp. 159-62.
[180] Simon Lloyd, 'William Longespee II: The Making of an English Crusading Hero (Part I)', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 35 (1991), p. 55.
[181] Wadsworth, 'Historical Romance in England', p. 161.
[182] Lloyd, 'William Longespee II', part i, p. 54.

The relevance of this poem to the current discussion is twofold. First of all, in 1235, Thomas de Beaumont, 6th Earl of Warwick, married Ela Longespée, daughter of William Longespée, 3rd Earl of Salisbury, and sister to the renowned crusader William Longespée II. Therefore, this would be yet another connection between this manuscript and the Warwick family. Furthermore, Guy de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, might have been in possession of another now lost copy of this text, as he appears to have donated it to Bordesley Abbey, in 1306.[183] Significantly, in the eponymous epic poem, William Longespée is compared to Roland himself.

> Ore lerrums de touz ceaux, si diroms avant
> De le hardi chivaler, le meilur combatant,
> Qe pur la krestienté puis le temps Rolant
> Ne combati en armes chivaler [si] vaillant. (ll. 216-8)[184]

Just as King Richard functions as an English Charlemagne, so William Longespée might have functioned as an English Roland.

In this poem, Longespée is depicted as the ideal *miles Christi*. When the Christian army realise that the situation is hopeless, one Sir Alexander Giffard asks William Longespée whether they should flee for safety. His answer encompasses all crusading motivation and transforms Longespée into a crusading martyr.

> 'Pur l'amur Jhesu Krist ci volumus devier
> Pur l'amur Jhesu Krist venims en ceste tere
> Nostre heritage par pruesse conqere,
> Cele joie celestiene, pur nul altre affere.
> Ci ne venims detenir ost ne nule guere.' (ll. 271-5)[185]

His heroic behaviour thus functions as a measure against which anyone else's should be compared. This poem's ostensibly anti-French stance is fuelled by the contemptuous description of the abominable behaviour of the French. In this text, the French are described as undoubtedly perfidious, treacherous and cowardly, only deserving to go to hell. This also appears to be the first poem in which

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[183] Simon Lloyd, Tony Hunt, 'William Longespee II: The Making of an English Crusading Hero (Part II)', *Nottingham Medieval Studies,* 36 (1992), p. 79.
[184] 'Now we will leave aside all of them, from now on we will talk about the bravest knight, the best warrior, who had ever fought for Christendom since Roland's times' (my translation) Lloyd, 'William Longespee II', part ii, p. 115.
[185] Lloyd, 'William Longespee II', part ii, p. 117. 'For the love of Jesus Christ, we want to die, for the love of Jesus Christ, we came to this land in order to conquer our heritage through prowess, for this celestial joy for no other reason. We came here to fight.' (My translation)

such extreme positions against the French are presented, thus serving as an antecedent for the discourse of abuse so widely exploited in the Auchinleck *King Richard*.[186]

> Il curt a son bon chival qe tresbien fu armé
> Si se mest en le flum, l'ewe [l]'ad enporté.
> Li et sun chival nea de son bon gré,
> L'alme fu tantost au Deble comandé.
> Et meint alter Fraunceis se nea lejour,
> De la vie perdre tant en aveint pöour.
> S'ils se fussent combatu pur le Dieu amur,
> Lur almes fussent en joie od lur c[r]eatur. (ll. 304-11)[187]

The account of King Richard's death reported in the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* also deserves special attention. Although the Auchinleck redactor tends to expand Richard I's deeds as compared to the other extant versions of the *Chronicle*, he only briefly mentions the King's death at the siege of Châlus. In the prologue to King Richard, the Auchinleck redactor clearly states that the knights who had lost their lives fighting, had earned a place of honour in common memory.

> Romaunce make folk of Fraunce
> Of kniȝtes þat were in destaunce
> Þat dyed þurth dint of sward (ll. 10-2)

However, Richard did not die by the sword. He recklessly rode before the besieged castle of Châlus essentially unarmed and was shot by a member of the garrison.[188] The *Chronicle* redactor hastens to clarify that Richard's renown will outlive him in his homeland as much as abroad, 'He was a duhti kniȝt & bold, | In ich lond wele of told' (ll. 2183-4) and instead of reporting the circumstances of his death, he quickly dismisses the subject by mentioning that he was – possibly treacherously – pierced by an arrow, 'Seþþe he was schoten allas | In Castel Gailar þer he was' (ll. 2185-6). Responsibility for his inglorious end had thus been taken from him. Furthermore, unlike what is reported for almost any other king mentioned in the *Chronicle*, Richard's burial place is not disclosed. This might seem rather unexpected considering his immense popularity;[189] nonetheless, since in this collection he

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[186] Salter, *English and International*, p. 76.
[187] Lloyd, 'William Longespee II', part ii, p. 117. 'He ran to his good horse, which was well armed, as soon as he entered the river, the water carried him away. He and his horse drowned; his soul went to hell. And many other Frenchmen drowned that day, so much they were afraid to die. If they had fought for the love of God, their souls would be in the bliss of heaven with their creator.' (My translation)
[188] Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 324.
[189] Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 1.

appears to play the role of the English national hero, it would have been rather inappropriate to admit that his burial place is not in England at all: his brain and entrails were buried at Châlus (in Aquitaine), his heart in Rouen (in Normandy), next to his elder brother, and the rest of him at his father's feet at Fontevraud (in Anjou).[190] Although Richard Plantagenet, King of England, Duke of Aquitaine and Normandy, Count of Maine and Anjou, had his earthly body buried in his beloved continental domains, he was raised to the role of the ideal English king, respected and feared in his homeland as much as abroad. In the Auchinleck *King Richard*, the Plantagenet king embodies the ideal of kingship by simultaneously being a knight and a crusade leader, a character whose deeds deserve to be celebrated in an English *chanson de geste*, a champion of Christianity that can claim his righteous place amongst the Nine Worthies. His wrath and strength make him a fearsome figure, a defender of his country's reputation, a figure in history who could embody the very idea of Englishness.

3.4 The English National Identity and the Saracens

The pervasiveness of the word 'Saracen' in the Auchinleck romances has not escaped scholarly attention. Ten out of eighteen romances and lays (*The King of Tars, Floris and Blancheflour, Guy of Warwick* couplets and stanzas, *Reinbroun, Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Of Arthour and of Merlin, Roland and Vernagu, Otuel a Kniȝt, King Richard,*) deal in fact to some degree with conflicts between Christians and Saracens. According to Siobhain Bly Calkin this emphasis on alterity allows the raising of questions about group identities and the features whereby these groups can be distinguished from one another.[191] However, before turning to the analysis of the depiction of Saracen warriors in the Auchinleck Manuscript and its consequences in terms of definition of different groups, it might be worth reflecting on the concept of group identity itself.

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[190] Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 325. Apart from William the Conqueror, Richard's father, Henry II, and brother, Henry the Young King, no other king of England was buried abroad. *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/ [accessed on 10/07/2022]
[191] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity*, p. 22.

The seventh-century bishop Isidore of Seville provided a definition of nation as a group of people sharing common origins, language and customs.[192] However, in his views, it is the language which holds centre stage in the emergence of a nation, as nations stem from languages and not the reverse, 'Ideo autem prius de linguis, ac deinde de gentibus posuimus, quia ex linguis gentes, non ex gentibus linguae exortae sunt' (IX.1.14).[193] Other factors may also intervene in the formation of a nation. For instance, according to Isidore of Seville, the language and mores of German populations had been influenced by the harshness of the weather characterising the regions in which they lived, 'Germanicae gentes dictae, quod sint inmania corpora inmanesque nationes saevissimis duratae frigoribus ; qui mores ex ipso caeli rigore traxerunt, ferocis animi et semper indomiti, raptu venatuque viventes' (IX.2.97).[194] Therefore, if on the one hand Isidore of Seville's definition of nation does not seem to take into account any connection between a geographic area and a specific nation, on the other territorial characteristics seem to exert a powerful influence on two of the main pillars on which the idea of nation is based, namely language and customs. Yet, a similar definition could hardly apply to fourteenth-century England, as territorial and linguistic unity seems to be missing. At the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was created, England was still a trilingual country, with several noblemen, including the king himself, possessing vast estates across the continent as well as in Scotland. Since the border between Scotland and England was constantly redefined, several lords might find themselves with shifting alliances. Therefore, the definition of English identity should be divorced from the actual territory in which the English people dwelled. Robert of Gloucester attempts to provide a definition of English people that might allow them to be recognised regardless of the place.

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[192] 'Gens est multitudo ab uno principio orta, sive ab alia natione secundum propriam collectionem distincta, ut Graeciae, Asiae' (IX.2.1) Isidori Hispaniensis Episcopi, *Etymologiarum Sive Originum*, edited by W. M. Lindsay, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911. 'A nation is a group of people descending from a sole origin, or distinct from another nation according to specific grouping, like "the people of Greece", "the people of Asia".' (My translation)

[193] 'For this reason, we have first written about languages, then about nations, because nations arose from languages, not languages from nations.' (My translation)

[194] 'Germanic populations are so called because they have almost superhuman bodies and because they constitute huge nations hardened by the cruellest cold; they have drawn their mores from the rigours of the weather itself, they are fierce in spirit and always untamed; they live by pillaging and hunting.' (My translation)

Þe veireste men in þe world þer inne beþ ibore
So clene &vair &pur wit among oþere men hii beþ
Þat me knoweþ hem in eche lond bi si te þar me hem seþ (ll. 181-3)[195]

Although many English medieval theorists also claimed that culture was strictly connected to blood, thus essentially implying that it was not separable from race, they were not unaware of the consequences of a mixed background.[196] For instance, one of the vices imputed to the English, drunkenness, was attributed to the Danes who allegedly introduced it into the country at the times of their invasion. The Danish invaders would thus exert a long-lasting negative influence on English culture.[197] However, drunkenness was not the sole vice attributed to the Danes. In his *Polychronicon*, Higden also blames them – as well as the Normans – for having corrupted the English language.[198] Isidore of Seville emphasises the extent to which the mother tongue is one of the defining features of a nation. After all, anyone is capable of speaking their own language.

> Omnem autem linguam unusquisque hominum sive Graecam, sive Latinam, sive ceterarum gentium aut audiendo potest tenere, aut legendo ex praeceptore accipere. Cum autem omnium linguarum scientia difficilis sit cuiquam, nemo tamen tam desidiosus est ut in sua gente positus suae gentis linguam nesciat. Nam quid aliud putandus est nisi animalium brutorum deterior? Illa enim propriae vocis clamorem exprimunt, iste deterior qui propriae linguae caret notitiam. (IX.1.10)[199]

Although England was a trilingual nation, the prologue to *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, seems to make the same ideological point by claiming that every man in England can certainly understand at least English 'Ac euerich Jnglische Jnglische can' (l. 24). The interconnection between language and nation is an ancient one and can be traced back to the Latin word *lingua*, which could function as a metonymy standing for the speakers of a specific language.[200]

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[195] Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle,* vol 1, p. 13.
[196] Andrea Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture in the Fourteenth Century,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 135.
[197] Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture*, p. 140.
[198] Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture*, p. 160.
[199] 'Every man can learn a language, be it Greek, or Latin, or any other, either by listening or by reading with the help of a teacher. However, since the knowledge of all languages is difficult for anyone, no one is so lazy as to ignore the language of his own nation. For if that were the case, what should one think of him except that he is worse than beasts? For, since the latter can express themselves through yelling, he who does not know his own language would be worse than them.' (My translation)
[200] Ruddick, p. 161. Lingua = 3. Language; 4. Speakers of a language, nation, people. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources,* http://clt.brepolis.net/dmlbs/pages/QuickSearch.aspx [accessed on 10/08/2022]

In his mid-fourteenth-century chronicle, *Scalacronica*, Sir Thomas Grey goes so far as to attribute the relief of the English at the deposition of Edward II to their capricious nature, which would be the result of their mixed background.[201]

> Soun fitz fust coronez a cest auauntdit parlement, viuant soun pier, par comune ascent, qi prist lez homages dez grantz et les obeisauns de toutz lez comunes, qi ioyous estoint de nouelle gouernail, pur le mesoueure du pier, et pur lour chaungeable costome, com par condicioun de vn coillet de diuers naciouns.[202]

He then continues his reflection on the consequences of Edward II's deposition by tracing an interesting parallel with England's ancient history. Since Vortigern's times, England had been repeatedly invaded, so much so that the right to rule had not been passed down from father to son, but rather conquered by fortune. In nations made by single spirits, the interest of the subjects is to maintain the dignity of their king and thus of their nation. Countries made of disparate souls are conversely exposed to the greed and the ambition of each single group.

> Pur ceo uoloint ascuns genz dire qe la diuersete dez corages dez Engles est la caus qe moue lez chaungementz du siecle entre eaux qe plus est muable en la Grant Bretaigne qen autres pays, qar en temps de chescun roy pius Vortiger ount aliens este grantement auancez illoeqes de toutz naciouns, qe diuers ount condiciouns, par quoy lour estuyt desa corder en voloir chescun enuoroit astre sires, pur ceo qe lez seignurages illoeqes ne suount pas nature mes fortune.[203]

Neighbour countries such as Scotland and Wales also appear to have functioned as models against which the English identity should be defined. For instance, Welsh people were criticised for their laziness as they did not have agriculture, whereas the Scots were repeatedly blamed for their misconduct at war.[204] The author of the *Vita Edwardi Secundi* harshly comments on the Irish's

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[201] Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture*, p. 140.

[202] Sir Thomas Grey, *Scalacronica: A Chronicle from A.D. 1066 to A.D. 1362*, pp. 152-3. 'His son was crowned by common assent at the aforesaid Parliament, during his father's life, and received the homage of the nobles and the obeisance of all the commons, who were delighted at the change of government [both] because of the misdoing of the [King's] father, and because of their fickle habit, so characteristic of a medley of different races.' Sir Thomas Grey, *Scalacronica: The Reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III*, p. 75.

[203] Sir Thomas Grey, *Scalacronica: A Chronicle from A.D. 1066 to A.D. 1362*, p. 153. 'Wherefore, some people are of opinion that the diversity of spirit among the English is the cause of their revolutions, which are more likely to happen in Great Britain than in other countries; for, in the time of every king since Vortigern, aliens of all nations, having diverse customs, have received great advancement there; so that when they happened to differ in purpose, each one desired to be lord, because the lordships in that country follow not birth, but fortune.' Sir Thomas Grey, *Scalacronica: The Reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III*, p. 75.

[204] Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture*, pp. 142-3.

reputed inclination towards rebellion against the English, 'Hec enim duo genera faciliter in rebellionem excitantur, et iugum seruitutis egre ferentes dominacionem Anglorum execrantur'.[205]

According to Adrian Hastings, a group of people sharing the same language and historical roots could be defined as an ethnic group. The other features of an ethnic community would be the presence of a collective name,[206] a myth of common ancestry, differentiating elements of common cultures as compared to other communities, an association with a territory and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population.[207] According to Smith what distinguished an ethnic community from a state is the link with a territory. In the first case it is merely symbolic or historical, in the second it is real; the concept of nation would thus be strongly connected to that of homeland.[208] In order for an ethnic group to be transformed into a nation, the community should share a certain consciousness of its identity often vehiculated through a literature of its own. The flourishing of vernacular literature thus plays a pivotal role in the construction of a national identity, as the heroes whose deeds are narrated in romances and chronicles generally embody the virtues that are perceived as foundational to that community.[209] The Auchinleck Manuscript provides many examples of appropriate Englishness as Guy of Warwick, Beues of Hamtoun, Reinbroun are all characterised by common traits: they are great warriors, faithful vassals and champions of Christianity.

A nation-state would conversely be characterised not only by the superimposition of king and nation, but also by a horizontal awareness and pride of being part of that nation. Therefore, the identification of a nation would also lead to the concept of nationalism intended as the belief according to which one perceives their own country as valuable and deserving to be defended and

[205] 'For these two races are easily roused to rebellion; they bear the yoke of slavery reluctantly, and curse the lordship of the English.' *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, pp. 106-7.
[206] Names were considered as so important in antiquity that associating one person or god with a name meant to acknowledge their own essence. Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 22.
[207] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, London: Penguin, 1991, p. 21.
[208] Smith, *National Identity*, p. 40.
[209] Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of a Nation*, p. 26. According to Benedict Anderson, it was the development of print technology that allowed vernacular literatures to become relevant to the construction of 'a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation'. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1991, pp. 37-46. David Green conversely set the development of nationalistic feelings during the Hundred Years' War. David Green, *The Hundred Years War: A People's History*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014, pp. 230-48.

celebrated. In order for feelings of nationalism to be reinforced, the suitable traits outlined in literary works should be then reversed and attributed to different groups. The denigration of enemies thus becomes one of the crucial aspects in the development of national identity.[210] Since many members of the community might share little knowledge of the characteristics of the other group, it is necessary for the portrait provided to be oversimplified if not even stereotyped. Religion would also play a key role in supporting national identity, not only as it provides the model of ancient nations, but also as it represents the authority that can endorse the creation of states and monarchies.[211]

Significantly, in his eighth-century chronicle *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum,* Bede addressed a single people, thus possibly anticipating a unity that was to take place only centuries later. Bede identifies three different types of unity. The first level consists of a territorial unity that could ideally be represented by a single island. However, in the eighth century, England was far from being a sole country, as the unification of all Anglo-Saxon kingdoms under one king was only to take place in 937, two centuries after Bede's death. If England could not be united in terms of a single king, at least it could be united by a single faith. The second level of unity would in fact be characterised by a sole Church under the guidance of the archbishop of Canterbury. The third type of unity envisaged by Bede is the test of time. Although the country had suffered repeated invasions by foreign countries, by the time he was writing all these different souls had intermingled in a single population.[212] In Bede's argumentation, religion plays a crucial role in the shaping of national identities. By actively participating in the creation of national saints and national saint kings, the Church could provide the country with an illustrious history of holiness. Furthermore, since the lower clergy were in contact with both upper and lower classes they could easily spread ideas of national identity, thus functioning as yet another tool in the hands of political propaganda.[213] Medieval England presents the features of

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[210] Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 38.
[211] Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 2-4.
[212] Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, pp. 36-7.
[213] Asbridge, *The Crusades: The War for the Holy Land*, pp. 187-8.

both a nation and a nation-state, as the English appear to have perceived themselves as a nation.[214] Therefore, since at the beginning of the fourteenth century England met the requirements to be considered a nation, it is crucial to analyse the features they outlined in order to distinguish themselves from relevant neighbour countries, such as Scotland and France.

Siobhain Bly Calkin posits that the pervasiveness of Saracens in the Auchinleck Manuscript serves exactly this purpose. Since Saracens and Christians are depicted in similar terms, she suggests that their sameness allows for the identification of subtle differences between extremely similar communities.[215] This point would be reinforced by their ubiquity in romances, the literary genre in which the virtues that are deemed important for a community are customarily staged. Considering that the Crusades were still a burning topic at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the representation of the struggle between Saracens and Christians might have been perceived as even more consequential.

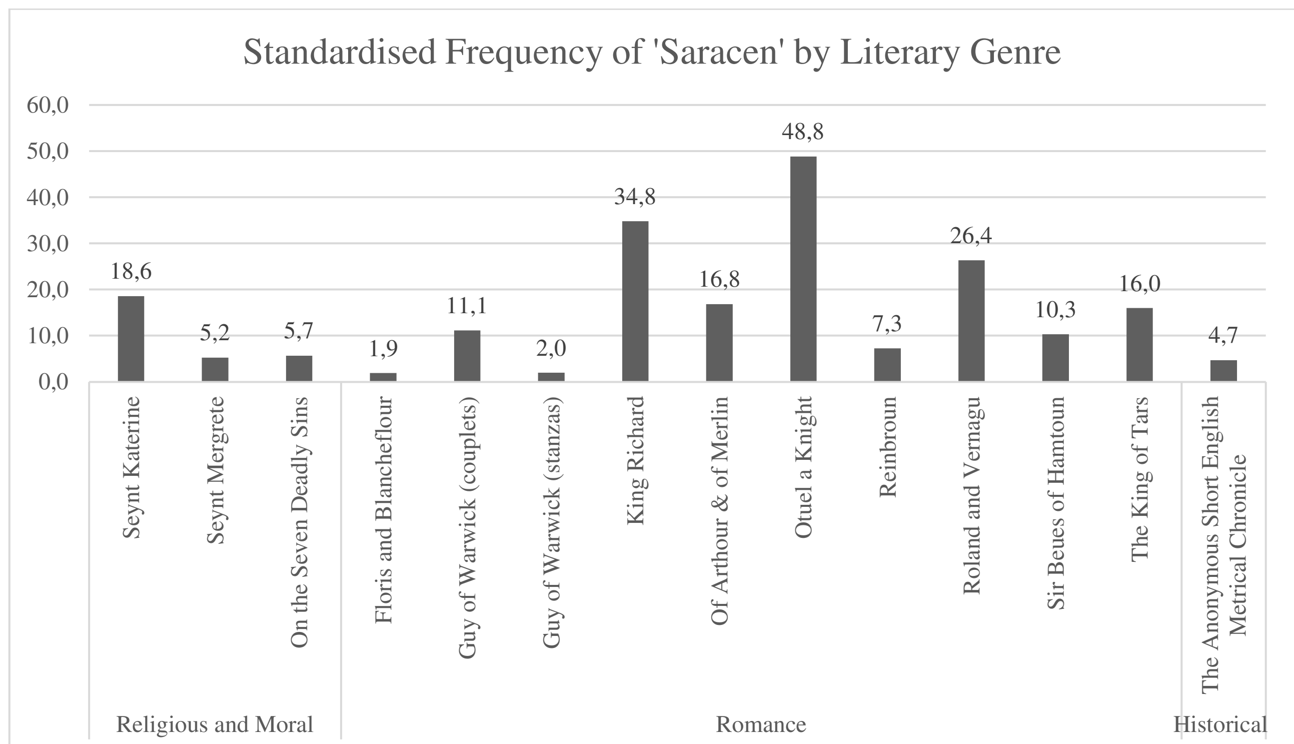

Figure 4. Standardised frequency of the word 'Saracen' across the Auchinleck Manuscript[216]

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[214] Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, p. 5.
[215] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity*, pp. 13-4.
[216] The standardised frequency has been obtained with the following formula: (Number of occurrences) / (Number of tokens)* 10,000.

Significantly though, in the Auchinleck poems not all confrontations between Saracens and Christians take place in the Holy Land and can thus be related to the Crusades in the strictest sense. Saracens actively appear to challenge the Western kingdoms by attempting repeated invasions or by supporting other heathens, such as the Danes, as though this struggle were to be interpreted as a dichotomic opposition between good and evil. If on the one hand, the emphasis on European countries, such as Spain, might stem from the necessity to divert the crusading effort to more attainable targets after the defeat in the Holy Land, on the other the pervasiveness of countries usually not related to crusading reinforces the impression that ‘Saracen’ was merely a word for ‘enemy’.

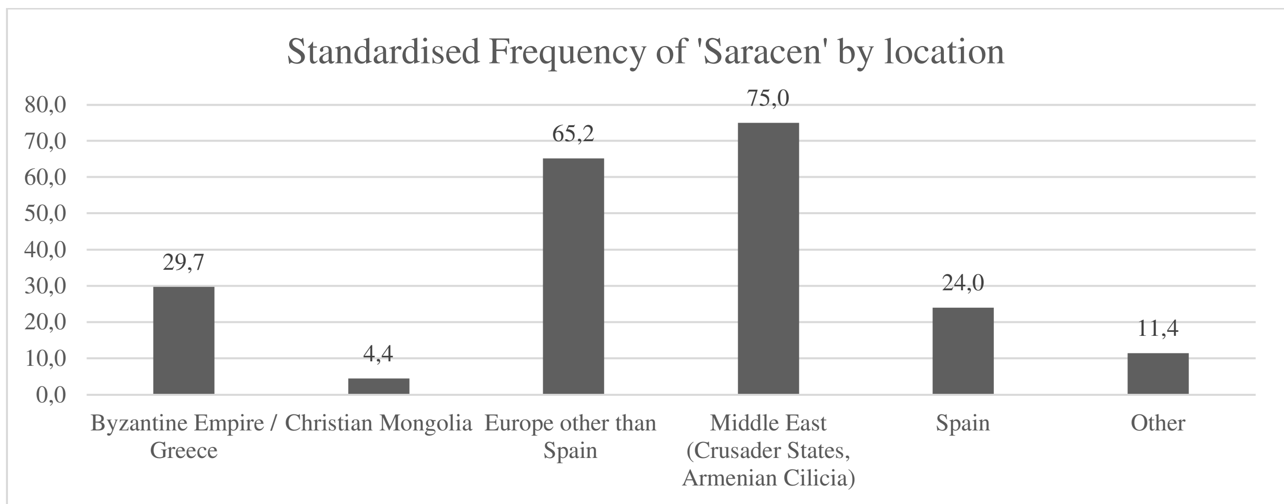

Figure 5. Standardised frequency of “Saracen” by location

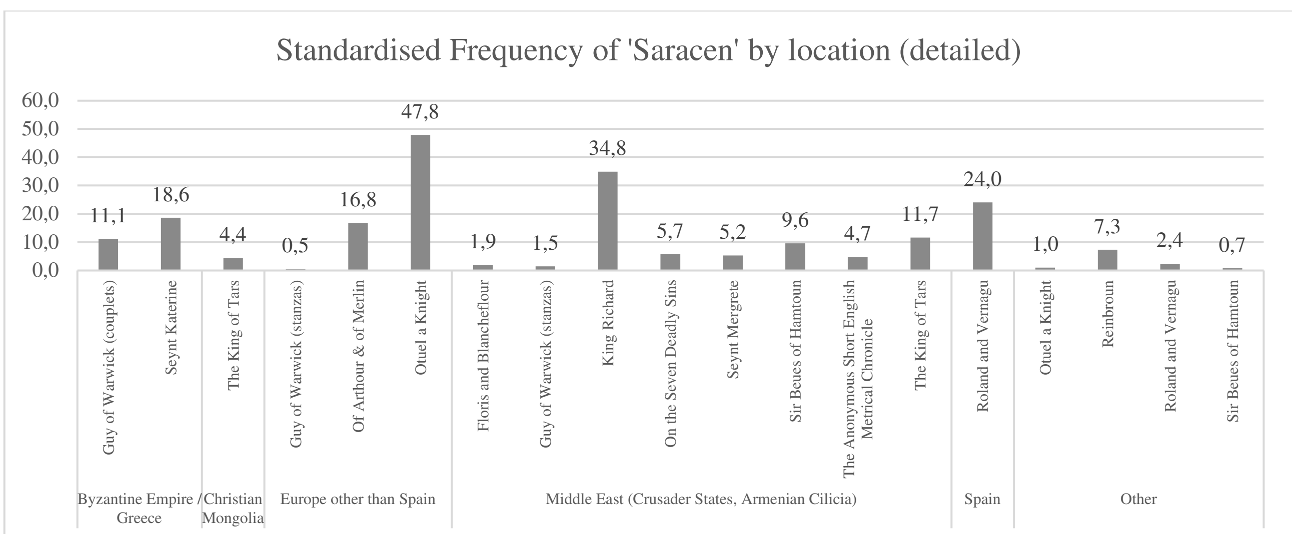

Figure 6. Standardised frequency of ‘Saracen’ by location (detailed)

This hypothesis would find support in the customary presence of Saracens in the army of villains. For instance, in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* when the Roman emperor Lucius summons his army of heathens to challenge King Arthur, he calls upon the Saracens dwelling in the most remote and exotic places.[217]

One might also argue that the word 'crusade' is completely absent from the Auchinleck Manuscript, thus possibly giving way to the possibility that the Saracens depicted were not related to the expeditions to the Holy Land. However, it might be worth considering that at the beginning of the fourteenth century the Christian expeditions in the Middle East were most frequently referred to as *peregrinatio, iter, via, expeditio* and later *passagium,* whereas the word 'crusade' came into use relatively late.[218] The Latin word *cruciatus* is only attested at the end of the fourteenth century, whereas the verb *crucesignare* (wherefrom *crucesignati*) was common even earlier as a reference to the taking of the cross.[219] Since the Crusades were also described as pilgrimages, the word 'pilgrim' was also extensively used to refer to crusaders. Although no historical crusade is mentioned except that led by Richard I, the constant use of a lexicon connected to the Christian expeditions in the Holy Land might have been aimed at evoking the crusading imagery in the audience's minds all the same.

The Western knowledge of Saracen culture, religion and mores was admittedly very limited. Their stereotyped portraits appear to have deliberately been sketched in order to provide the Christian heroes with an arena in which they could demonstrate their greatness. Far from being described as weak and insignificant, the Saracen opponents are shown to be formidable adversaries who can only be defeated by the power of the Christian faith. They were conceived as degraded copies of Christian heroes. Since religion plays such a pivotal role in the definition of identities, it comes as no surprise that the unshakeable Christian trinity is replaced with a pantheon of variable gods such as Mahoun,

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[217] *King Arthur's Death: The Middle English Stanzaic Morte Arthur and Alliterative Morte Arthure*, edited by Larry D. Benson, revised by Edward E. Foster, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications for TEAMS, 1994, (ll. 570-609), pp. 149-50.
[218] Paterson, *Singing the Crusades*, p. 3.
[219] *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* http://clt.brepolis.net/dmlbs/pages/QuickSearch.aspx [accessed on 15/07/2022]

Apolin, Ternagaunt, or even Gouin and Gibiter in *Beues of Hamtoun*. In the eyes of the medieval audience, the justness of their faith was demonstrated by God's continuously assisting the Christian heroes. The contrast is even starker if one considers that Christian knights unconditionally put their lives into God's hands, whereas their Saracen opponents seem to lack such a complete faith. For instance, in the first part of *Guy of Warwick* when the eponymous hero overcomes his opponent, the Sultan swears against his gods and curses them for having forsaken him, 'Godenes in ȝou nas neuer yfounde | No more miȝt þan in an hounde' (ll. 3356-7). Narratives celebrating the superiority of Christian knights were unsurprisingly popular at the time in which the Latin States were disintegrating, as though they were conceived to function as some sort of compensation – or even consolation – for the irremediable loss of the Holy Land.[220]

Religion was considered such a central trait in people's identity that it could influence not only their consciences, but even their outward appearance. In the *King of Tars*, when the Sultan finally converts to Christianity, his dark skin suddenly changes colour and becomes as white as that of any other Christian. No detail about Otuel's possible outward changes is provided and yet, when he meets his previous companions after the conversion, they cannot recognise him.

'Kniȝt' he seide 'so mote þou þe,
Tel me what þi name be;
Þou art so douȝti man of dede,
And mani a kniȝt hauest maked blede,
Ich wolde fol fain bi myn eye
Bringe þi name to þe king Garsie.'
'Bi God, felawe' quaþ Otuwel
'Er þis þou kneuwe my name fol wel;
So God sschilde me fram sschame,
Otuel is my Cristine name.
Mahun ich habbe forsake,
And to Ihesu ich habbe me take.' (ll. 1145-56)

One crucial aspect of these conversions is that the newly converted Christian must immediately prove the sincerity of his new allegiance by fighting against his previous companions. Both Otuel and the Sultan of the *King of Tars* promptly lead a campaign against the Saracens.

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[220] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity*, p. 48.

Several examples of conversions are reported in the Auchinleck Manuscript with different degrees of sincerity and success in both directions. As for female characters, in the *King of Tars* the Christian princess stages a mock conversion in order to save the life of her people. Her martyr-like sacrifice is repaid by the ultimate conversion of the Sultan himself. In *Beues of Hamtoun,* the conversion of the beautiful Saracen princess Josiane takes on the shades of courtly love as she embraces her new faith out of love for Beues. Otuel as well converts to Christianity and is transformed into the perfect *miles Christi,* possibly even braver than his Christian fellow knights. When conversion is not possible and the soul's salvation cannot be attained, death is the sole viable option. In *Roland and Vernagu*, during a lull in the fight between Roland and the giant Vernagu, the Christian paladin provides his opponent with religious instruction. However, Vernagu is inherently wicked and cannot be converted. An angel is sent from Heaven to inform Roland that Vernagu must die.[221]

A similar episode can also be found in *Sir Beues of Hamtoun.* Although the Saracen Ascopart had shifted his alliance by helping Josiane and Beues escape, he ultimately proves no different from Vernagu. His gigantic size prevents him from being properly baptised. As soon as Beues replaces him with a new page – Terri – he rejects Christianity and betrays his friends. One might argue that he acts out of jealousy at having been dismissed so quickly; nonetheless, the impossibility to baptise him seems to reveal that his inherent wickedness cannot be redeemed. Mass conversions typical of the *chanson de geste* are also repeatedly staged in the Auchinleck romances. The narrative strategy used by the Auchinleck redactor of *Beues of Hamtoun* in order to emphasise the hero's inherent Christian identity deserves further attention. Though at the beginning of the romance Beues of Hamtoun is not aware of the existence of Christmas because he was raised by Saracens, his Christian identity is never questioned. Beues in fact scornfully replies to the Saracen who ridicules him for his ignorance about Christmas that he is ready to prove himself worthy of his Christian chivalric identity.

> Beues to þat Sarasin said
> 'Of Cristendom ȝit ichaue abraid,
> Ichaue seie on þis dai riȝt

[221] According to Geraldine Heng the emphasis on conversions might also reveal an anxiety for the presence of 'a domestic community of religious aliens in the English homeland'. Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 86.

> Armed mani a gentil kniȝt
> Torneande riȝt in þe feld
> Wiþ helmes briȝt and mani scheld;
> And were ich alse stiþ in plas
> Ase euer Gii me fader was,
> Ich wolde for me lordes loue,
> Þat sit hiȝ in heuene aboue,
> Fiȝte wiþ ȝow euerichon,
> Er þan ich wolde hennes gon.' (ll. 607-18)

According to Calkin, two main Saracen types can be detected in the Auchinleck Manuscript: the 'beast-like' warrior (like Vernagu) that must be annihilated and the 'ferocious knightly opponent' that the Christians would like to persuade to fight on their side by conversion (like Otuel).[222] This second type is disturbingly similar to any Christian knight. In *Otuel a Kniȝt* 11 out of 24 instances of the cluster 'douhti knight(s)' refer to Otuel (before and after the conversion), whereas only 5 refer to Roland. In *Otuel a Kniȝt*, Charlemagne even comments that Otuel would have been a remarkably brave knight if only he had been Christian, 'it is harm, iwis, | Þat þou nost what follaut is' (ll. 315-6), thus possibly implying a certain degree of sameness in the chivalric attitudes of Christians and Saracens. Calkin emphasises that Saracen and Christian knights fight in the same way. A mounted attack is immediately followed by hand-to-hand combat in which armours are torn, helmets are smashed, spears and shields broken into pieces.[223] And yet, in spite of being exhausted, the Christian knight has a final surge in strength and at last succeeds in striking a blow that beheads if not bisects the Saracen opponent, armour and all. If on the one hand this customary description might convey the idea that the two opponents are to some extent alike, on the other this might be considered a narrative device aimed at having these texts recognised as instances of *chanson de geste*.

Significantly, the blurred boundaries between Saracens and Christians can also be detected in the weapons wielded by both. When he is still a Saracen, Otuel wields a proper sword, thus possibly implying that he already retains the features of the proper knight, 'Corsouse m[i swerde ful] harde fel, | And bot þere Freinche flechs fol welrather' (ll. 131-2). Nevertheless, when he converts to Christianity, he is reported to wield a *fauchoun*, 'Otuwel wiþ a fauchoun | Cleef him al þe heued

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[222] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity,* p. 22.
[223] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity,* pp. 24-5.

adoun' (ll. 1119-20), the Saracen iconic curved-bladed sword. Vernagu himself is reported to have wielded the same kind of sword, 'He [Vernagu] smot Rouland on þe croun | A strok wiþ his fauchoun' (ll. 830-1). Possibly unexpectedly, Charles's Christian knights also wield the Saracen weapon *par excellence*, the *fauchouns*, '& eueri duȝti kniȝt | Held a torche liȝt | & a naked fauchoun' (ll. 455-7). A *fauchoun* is also used by Beues when he has already come back to claim his possessions in England, 'Beues nolde no leng abide; | He rod to him wiþ gret randoun, | & wiþ Morgelai is fauchoun' (ll. 3632-4) and again, at the end of the romance, when he fights against the treacherous king Yvor 'Out of here sadles þai gonne springe | And wiþ fauchouns togedere flinge' (ll. 3985-6). Curiously, in *King Richard*, any reference to *fauchouns* is absent. Nonetheless, distinctive weapons are not the only instances of sameness between Christians and Saracens that can be detected in the Auchinleck Manuscript. In *Roland and Vernagu,* Charlemagne too is described as a giant, thus allowing the drawing of a disturbing parallel with his Saracen opponent.[224]

> No[w] late we be of þis þing
> & speke of Charles þe king
> Þat michel was of miȝt,
> Of his lengþe & his brede,
> As þe Latin ous sede,
> Ichil ȝou rede ariȝt;
> Tventi fete he was o lengþe
> & also of gret strengþe
> & of a stern siȝt,
> Blac of here & rede of face,
> Whare he com in ani place
> He was a douhti kniȝt. (ll. 425-36)

As explored in the previous section, this description might somehow match that of King Richard provided not only in the eponymous romance, but also in the illumination preceding it in the Auchinleck Manuscript.

If on the one hand it is undeniable that the Saracen opponents are reported to admire and at times even share the Christian chivalric code,[225] they never conform to it, unless they are pre-destined, like

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[224] The description of Charlemagne as a giant seems to have drawn from Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni.* His first biographer in fact describes him as exceptionally tall. Elizabeth Melick, Susanna Greer Fein and David Raybin 'General Introduction' in *The Roland and Otuel Romances and the Anglo-Norman Otinel* edited by Elizabeth Melick, Susanna Greer Fein and David Raybin, TEAMS Middle English Texts https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/melick-fein-raybin-general-introduction [accessed on 08/08/2022]

[225] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity,* pp. 26-7.

Otuel, to be converted. For instance, when Christian heroes, such as Guy and Roland, are asked by their opponents for permission to drink, they immediately allow it. However impressed the Saracen warriors might be by the kindness of the Christian knights, they never return such a favour, thus possibly emphasising the irreversibility of their wicked nature. If they could ever be considered knights, they are depicted as merely degraded copies of their Christian counterparts.

However, as stressed by Calkin, the centrality of Saracens in the Auchinleck Manuscript appears to be crucial to raise awareness of the subtle differences between otherwise too close identities.[226] Given the historical and cultural ties between England and France, the difficulty inherent in defining an English national identity distinct from that of France might have given rise to the search of fictional ways to shape alterity. Nonetheless, this same closeness does not only involve England and France, but also Scotland. If the Saracen opponents might be considered figures for the Scots (or even for the French), the Auchinleck romances would somehow conform to the fourteenth-century tendency to depict European conflicts as some sort of crusades.

Considering the portrait of the Scots provided in contemporary chronicles such as Peter Langtoft's and its Middle English translation by Mannyng, it might be possible to suggest that the Scots as well were considered debased copies of their English counterparts. The third and longest part of Pierre de Langtoft's *Chronicle* is exclusively devoted to the reign of King Edward I.[227] Langtoft's sources for this last section are still unclear; however, he might have drawn on now lost records or on his own direct knowledge of the king's affairs. After all, having translated the correspondence between Pope Boniface VIII and King Edward I during the Anglo-Scottish wars he must have had some knowledge of the accounts used by the King of England to accuse his Scottish enemies of unparalleled atrocities against the English population of the Borders.[228] Furthermore, Langtoft's priory at Bridlington was

[226] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity*, pp. 13-4.
[227] The first section, based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae,* deals with the history of England from its foundation by Brutus to the Anglo-Saxon conquest; the second, based on the chronicles of Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury, covers the realm of the Anglo-Saxon as well as the early Norman kings up to the death of King Henry III.
[228] Thea Summerfield, *The Matter of Kings' Lives: The Design of Past and Present in the Early Fourteenth-Century Verse Chronicles by Pierre de Langtoft and Robert Mannyng*, Amsterdam & Atlanta: GA, 1998, pp. 15; 20.

amongst those in charge of analysing all ancient chronicles in order to provide historical evidence for Edward I's claim to suzerainty over Scotland.[229] Langtoft's staunch support of Edward I's policy is apparent in his attitude towards the Scots: he depicts them as savage and treacherous, solely driven by the desire to annihilate the English.[230] This resentment is particularly evident in the short political songs interspersed in the last section of the chronicle.[231] In these songs the debasement of the enemy is reinforced by an equal debasement of the tone used: the expressions of contempt are interspersed with vulgar humour.[232] Mannyng's translation of Langtoft's *Chronicle* entirely aligns with his source text not only in terms of content, but also of form. In the Middle English version, the debasement of the tone is in fact conveyed by heavily alliterating lines in Northern dialect.[233]

The similarities between Saracens and Scots does not seem to be limited to the description of their reprehensible behaviour, but rather extend to the nature of the conflict itself. Just as the war between England and Scotland is described as unavoidable and unending in the *Chronicle of Mannyng*,[234] so in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, King Arthur is reported to have merely repelled one of the many upcoming Saracen invasions. Due to the strained relations that preceded the Hundred Years' War, France as well might be considered a suitable candidate to fulfil the paradigm of the debased Saracen enemy. Nonetheless, although as soon as the negotiations for a new crusade collapsed the French king moved the crusading fleet gathered at Marseille before the English shores, no invasion eventually took place.[235] Therefore, in *Of Arthour and of Merlin* the emphasis on repeated Saracen raids across England definitely seems to evoke those perpetrated by the Scots on the Borders.

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[229] Summerfield, *The Matter of Kings' Lives*, p. 17.
[230] Summerfield, *The Matter of Kings' Lives*, p. 52.
[231] Langtoft's Chronicle is almost entirely written in Anglo-Norman alexandrine *laisses* except for nine tail-rhyme political songs composed in either Anglo-Norman, or in Middle English or even in both languages. The section containing these songs begins with the Welsh rebellion led by Madog ap Llywelyn and Morgan ap Mareddud in 1294 and ends with the execution of William Wallace in 1305. Matthews, *Writing to the King*, pp. 52-80.
[232] Summerfield, *The Matter of Kings' Lives*, p. 21.
[233] Summerfield, *The Matter of Kings' Lives*, p. 141.
[234] Summerfield, *The Matter of Kings' Lives*, p. 186.
[235] Christopher Tyerman, 'Philip VI and the Recovery of the Holy Land', *The English Historical Review*, 394 (1985), p. 25.

However, the *Chronicle* by Jordan Fantosme might offer further insight into the analogy Scots / Saracens. The twelfth-century Anglo-Norman verse *Chronicle* reports the civil war between Henry II and his eldest son, as well as William I of Scotland's incursions into the North of England to support the Young King's cause. The description of the Scots is not merely imbued with disdain, but almost amounts to racial hatred of the Gaelic people.[236] As stressed by Laura Ashe,

> their alterity maps the incursions into northern England as a foreign invasion, not a rebellion, which aids Fantosme in his creation of a coherent sense of national identity. And importantly, the structuring principle of that identity – the land – is available as a signifier of the difference of the Scots not only because of their damage to England […] but because of their own vastly different highland culture.[237]

Significantly, their alterity also extends to another crucial aspects of national identity: religion. Just like the Saracens, the Scots described by Fantosme are pagans – 'Ne portent fei a Deu' (l. 688).[238] Henry II's repentance for his involvement in the assassination of St Thomas Becket is immediately followed by the capture of the King of Scotland. This miraculous coincidence cannot but reinforce the idea that God is fighting on the Christian and thus the English side.[239] The Scots' paganism makes this instance of God's assistance close to those depicted in *Roland and Vernagu, Beues of Hamtoun* and *Guy of Warwick.*

On the margins of the fourteenth-century Luttrell Psalter, a similar analogy is given a pictorial form.[240] On folio 169r, a climax of cruelty unfolds on the right-hand margin of the page. First, an unarmed man is attacked from behind by a dark figure, then an old defenceless widow is mercilessly hit by an assailant whose two-colour painted face seem to reveal his Scottish identity, finally a grotesque murderer is dismembering children's bodies.[241] The dark Scottish figure at the top of the

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[236] Ashe, *Fiction and History in England,* p. 116.
[237] Ashe, *Fiction and History in England,* pp. 116-7.
[238] Ashe, *Fiction and History in England,* p. 117. '[they] have no faith in God, the son of Mary.' Jordan Fantosme, *Chronicle*, edited and translated by R.C. Johnston, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981, pp. 52-3.
[239] Ashe, *Fiction and History in England,* p. 117
[240] Michael Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England*, London: Reaktion Books, 1998, p. 288.
[241] The illuminations function as a visual representation of Psalm 93.6 'Viduam et advenam interfecerunt, et pupillos occiderunt' (They slay the widow and the foreigner, they murder the fatherless). *BibleGateway* – 'Psalm 94.6-7' (Vulgate 93). As stressed by Camille, the Scots are often depicted as 'wild and dark'. For instance, in a poem possibly composed after the taking of Lincoln, in 1217, they are referred to as *nigras Scottorum*, 'Prima fuit rabies proprio concepta tumore; | Altera belligeras Francorum traxerat alas; | Conduxit nigras Scottorum tertia turmas; | Flexit quarta leves tenui sub veste Galenses.' (The first rage was conceived by its own pride; the second drew hither the warlike legions of the French; the

page is wielding a curved-blade sword, possibly resembling a *fauchoun*, a scimitar. On folio 162v, an additional group of dark-faced soldiers are attacking a gentleman. Although they hold small round shields of the same kind as those used by Saracens, they cannot be identified as Turkish or Mameluke soldiers, as the shape of their armour clearly reveals their European identity.[242] One is under the impression that these soldiers were supposed to be identified as Scots.

However, the Scots had not always been depicted in derogatory terms. For instance, in the Chronicle of Lanercost, the author emphasises how the Scottish Princess Margaret managed to civilise the Norwegian court by teaching them manners as well as the English and French language.[243] When Richard I was captured on his way back to England, the Scottish king did not take advantage of the situation, but rather refused to join Count John's schemes to overthrow the legitimate king.[244] The turning point was thus the dynastic crisis triggered by the premature death of Princess Margaret whose marriage to Edward II was supposed to unify the two crowns. After 1296 the machinery of political propaganda was set in motion in order to justify any military operations beyond the northern borders. A war against fellow Christians always needed to be carefully justified, especially at a time in which European leaders were discussing new expeditions aimed at recovering the Latin States after the fall of Acre. Pride was one of the main tools at the hands of political propaganda, as it not only provided a plausible explanation for any defeat, but was also considered a chief vice in contrast to the appropriate Christian humbleness.[245] It comes as no surprise that it was ascribed to French and Scots alike. Therefore, Saracens could perfectly function as a replacement for both, by simultaneously evoking barbarity and sameness. The Auchinleck Manuscript, as a literary work conceived in such a political scenario, could not but be profoundly influenced by the major events of its time. In spite of

third conducted the black troops of the Scots; the fourth bent the inconstant Welsh under light garment.) *The Political Songs of England,* p. 20; Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, p. 286. As stressed by Camille, the Scots are also depicted not only as savage, but also as almost devilish figures. For instance, Jean le Bel, who took part in Edward III's first campaign in Scotland describes the country he reached as a wilderness whose inhabitants were as savage as the land itself. Nicole Chareyron, 'La Sauvage Ecosse dans la Chronique de Jean le Bel', *Nouveaux Mondes et Mondes Nouveaux au Moyen Age*, 20 (1994), pp. 19-27.

[242] Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, p. 287.

[243] Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture*, p. 146.

[244] Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 236.

[245] Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture*, p. 150.

the unsuccessful planning of any further crusade, the general atmosphere of fervent activism created by the recovery treatises still permeated the contemporary cultural background. Nonetheless, the thematic coherence presented throughout the collection reveals that it was also informed by the Anglo-Scottish wars. After all, the Auchinleck Manuscript could certainly not remain indifferent to the main arguments used by political propaganda to justify any ongoing and upcoming conflicts.

4 English Heroes and the Four *Matières*: the Construction of a National Epic

In his twelfth-century poem *La Chanson des Saisnes* (the Song of Saxons), Jehan Bodel famously groups romances and *gestes* into three main categories: the 'Matter of France', the 'Matter of Britain' and the 'Matter of Rome', referring to those texts featuring Charlemagne and his *douzepers*, King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table and the leaders from classical antiquity respectively.

> Qui d'oïr et d'antandre a loisir et talant
> Face pais, si escout bone chançon vaillant
> Don li livre d'estoire sont tesmoing et garant.
> Jà nuls vilains jugleres de ceste ne se vant,
> Qar il n'an sauroit dire ne les vers ne le chant.
> Ne sont que .iij. matières à nul home antandant:
> De France et de Bretaigne et de Rome la grant;
> Et de ces .iij. matières n'i a nule samblant. (ll. 1-8)[1]

In Bodel's views, the Matters of Rome the Great as well as of France are by far the most important, as they could provide the audience with valuable historical knowledge, whereas the Matter of Britain could merely provide some frivolous entertainment.[2] However, no 'Matter of England' is listed amongst the *matières* outlined by Bodel. As stressed by Rosalind Field, this new label was created at the beginning of the twentieth century by W. H. Schofield, who titled the section concerning the romances about medieval English heroes as 'The Matter of England', without providing any specific definition of the new category.[3] This matter would differ from the other three in that it would exclusively feature insular heroes. Yet, according to Schofield, the Middle English romances set in Anglo-Saxon England do not appear to have been inspired by Old English narratives, but rather by continental traditions. Therefore, although the process of re-appropriation of pre-conquest history was aimed at constructing an illustrious national epic, it appears to have been carried out through post-conquest and possibly continental romance models.

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[1] Jean Bodel, *La Chanson des Saxons*, edited by Michel Francisque, Paris: Téchener, 1839, p. 1. 'Let those who can enjoy the pleasure of increasing their understanding and knowledge hold themselves quiet, let them listen to a rewarding and valiant song, whose reliability is granted by its having been drawn from history books. Let no mean jester boast of it, for he will be able to perform it neither in rhyme nor in music. There are but three matters that one needs to know: the matters of France and Britain and of Rome the Great. Nothing can resemble them.' (My translation).

[2] In Bodel's classification, the Matter of Britain is labelled as 'vain et plaisant' (vain and pleasant), that of Rome as 'sage' (wise), whereas that of France as 'voir' (true). 'Li conte de Bretaigne sont si vain et plaisant; | Cil de Rome sont sage et de san aprenant; | Cil de France de voir chascun jor apparant'. Bodel, *La Chanson des Saxons*, pp. 1-2.

[3] William Henry Schofield, *English Literature, from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, London: Macmillan, 1906, p. 258.

> Our national epic, if we have any, is based upon British rather than Anglo-Saxon tradition. King Arthur occupies in the political history of England a position somewhat parallel to Charlemagne's in that of France: Arthur was not English, and Charlemagne was not French. Our Germanic forefathers did not have the same large supply of legendary fiction concerning Arthur that was accessible to their descendants after the Conquest and could never have dreamed that a fabulous hero of their despised Welsh neighbours would come to be exalted to so high a place as Arthur was destined to fill. Before the coming of the Normans the rulers of England sang by preference the exploits of ancient Teutonic heroes, or those of men of their own near kin or type who had gained fame at home. […] Throughout the Middle Ages the stories of Saxon warriors were repeated with delight, especially among those whose blood-ties were strongest with the Germanic past.[4]

Schofield originally identifies a selection of Middle English and Anglo-Norman romances showing general similarities in terms of plot and setting: *Havelock*, *Waldef*, *Beues of Hamtoun*, *Guy of Warwick*, *King Horn* (both in its Anglo-Norman redaction, *The Romance of Horn,* and in its later Middle English version *Horne Childe and Maiden Rimnild*), *Athelston*, the ballads about Robin Hood, as well as *Gamelyn*.[5] In the 1974 *Cambridge Biography of English Literature,* Derek Pearsall supplements this list with *Richard Coeur de Lyon* and *William of Palerme*.[6] W. R. J. Barron appears to agree with the core of the list, though he classifies *Richard Coeur de Lyon* as derivative. Diane Speed conversely proposes to include in the list *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, *Sir Tristram* and *Sir Orfeo*, by virtue of their presence in the Auchinleck Manuscript.[7] According to Kevin Jerome Davidson, although the division in 'matters' presents several limitations especially regarding the texts to include and their relevant characteristics, some patterns of consistency can still be detected. The romances belonging to the 'Matter of England' would share a core of distinctive features: 'the representation of the hero, […] the recognised popular tone of such works manifested through characterisation of dramatis personae, […] a moral truth which is communicated by the author to the audience.'[8]

However, these are not the sole attempts that have been made to classify the above-mentioned texts. Susan Crane proposes a neat distinction between the romances of insular and continental origins, arguing that 'Anglo-Norman romances and their Middle English translations form a

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[4] Schofield, *English Literature*, p. 259.
[5] Rosalind Field, 'The Curious History of the Matter of England', in *Boundaries in Medieval Romance*, edited by Neil Cartlidge, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008, p. 30.
[6] Derek Pearsall, 'Matter of England', in *The New Cambridge Biography of English Literature*, edited by George Watson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974, pp. 429-36; Field, 'The Curious History of the Matter of England', p. 30.
[7] Field, 'The Curious History of the Matter of England', p. 32.
[8] Kevin Jerome Davidson, 'Imitation and Innovation in Matter of England Romance', *Historical Reflections*, 12 (1985), p. 141.

distinctively "insular" body of works, closely related to one another and to their situation in England'.[9] In her survey of Anglo-Norman literature, Dominica Legge classified a corpus of texts reputedly written to celebrate the antiquity of the Norman families by then established in England as 'ancestral romances'.[10] The Middle English translations of some of these texts appear to share the same characteristics previously outlined for insular and Matter-of-England romances, thus possibly implying that these categories at least partially overlap. Their special interest for pre-conquest historical settings also earned them the title of 'historical romances'.[11] Significantly, the romances analysed by Legge all appear to be pervaded by the baronial preoccupations concerning succession rights and the extent of royal power. Considering that they were all composed between the mid-twelfth and the mid-thirteenth century, this might come as no surprise. Those decades were in fact characterised by increasing political turmoil and widespread baronial unrest in England as well as in the English continental possessions.

Both the Anglo-Norman originals and their Middle English translations share a taste for geographical accuracy. The customary vagueness characterising continental romances is thus replaced by explicit references to specific English sites. According to Rouse, 'the retelling of the Anglo-Saxon past is intimately connected with place',[12] as it makes the historical account relevant to a contemporary audience. Local communities were moved from the margins of the political

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[9] Crane, *Insular Romance*, p. 1. A definition of insular romances and their preoccupations is also provided by Laura Ashe in her analysis of the *History of William the Marshall*: 'Courtly and chivalric concerns are excluded; in their place is the pious elevation of corporate endeavour, God's peace, and the king's peace, and the defence of the land and people. This model is characteristic of the romance of England, the so-called "Insular" romances, written in French in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and later in English. These texts – the romances of Horn, and Havelok, Guy of Warwick, Fulk Fitzwarren – are constructed around the ideals of lordship and landholding, inheritance and dynastic progression, in a way which marks their drastic difference from the febrile fictionality of the Continental Arthurian romance. And most importantly, they offer a strong, not to say realistic, model of lordship, kingship, and governance, a sense of the duties and the qualities of a king, and eventually, as Elizabeth I would say, of a king of England too.' Ashe, Laura, 'William Marshal, Lancelot, and Arthur: Chivalry and Kingship', in *Anglo-Norman Studies XXX, Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, edited by C. P. Lewis, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007, pp. 19-40.

[10] The 'ancestral romances' outlined by Dominica Legge are: *Guillaume d'Angleterre, Waldelf, Boeve de Haumtone, Fergus, Gui de Warewic* and *Fouke Fitzwarin*. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963, pp. 139-75. Raluca L. Radulescu, 'Genealogy in Insular Romance', in *Broken Lines: Genealogical Literature in Late-Medieval Britain and France*, edited by Raluca L. Radulescu and Edward Donald Kennedy, Turnhout: Brepols, 2008, pp. 12-21.

[11] Elizabeth Salter, *English and International: Studies in the Literature, Art and Patronage of Medieval England*, edited by Derek Pearsall and Nicolette Zeeman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 30; Rouse, 'The Romance of the Anglo-Saxon Past, p. 52.

[12] Rouse, 'The Romance of the Anglo-Saxon Past', p. 53.

chessboard to its centre, as they could boast their participation in crucial moments of England's history. Most importantly, a fourteenth-century audience could perceive all around them the tangible signs left by historical events on their contemporary landscape, thus essentially reinforcing a sense of continuity from past to present and, by extension, to future as well. The importance given to place names in romances and chronicles does not solely stem from those redactors' etymological interest, but also from the desire to trace the story of the most prominent Anglo-Norman families back to the Anglo-Saxon past. The creation of these historical roots could allow them to claim for themselves an illustrious ancestry intimately connected with England. Just as *Of Arthour and of Merlin* is part of the process of cultural reappropriation of the Arthurian legend, so the romances belonging to the Matter of England would allow the pre-conquest past to be included in the line of greatness directly connecting the Trojan Brutus to the Plantagenet kings.[13] Celtic and Anglo-Saxon legendary and historical past was revived in order to legitimise the Norman ruling class. It thus comes as no surprise that in *Beues of Hamtoun,* the construction of Arundel Castle is not traced back to the realm of William the Conqueror, but rather to that of the Anglo-Saxon King Eadred. In the romance, the castle is not named after the horehound, a plant probably growing on the site, but rather after the eponymous hero's horse.[14] The replacement of the original etymology with a folkloric one allows for the integration of the earls of Arundel's castle into England's historical landscape and illustrious past.[15] Although the desire to provide pseudo-historical settings might imply a unidirectional passage of chronicle material into romances, some instances reveal a movement in the opposite direction. The story of Guy of Warwick being included into several chronicles starting from the fourteenth century might in fact suggest more of a two-directional movement in which legends enter chronicles as much as chronicles enter legends.

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[13] Rouse, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 54. Significantly a similar process of cultural re-appropriation involving the Gaelic culture took place in Ireland starting from the mid-thirteenth century. McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces,* p. 224.

[14] Rouse, 'The Romance of the Anglo-Saxon Past', p. 64.

[15] The name of Arundel Castle originally derived from Har-hun-dell, meaning horehound valley. Robert Rouse, 'Chronicle and Romance' in *Medieval Historical Writing: Britain and Ireland, 500-1500*, edited by Jennifer Jahner, Emily Steiner, Elizabeth M. Tyler, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 402-3.

Yet, one might wonder whether Middle English romances were perceived as reliable sources of historical knowledge and could thus enjoy the same status as chronicles for the reconstruction of England's past greatness. Peter Langtoft's chronicle could offer an insight into the perception of the reliability of romance material. While reporting the events taking place during Æthelstan's realm, the thirteenth-century historian appears to have been presented with two competing versions of the tenth-century Viking invasions. The first was the famous account of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* culminating in the epic description of the Battle of Brunanburh, whereas the second was the romance-derived story of Guy's single-combat against the giant Colbrond. In Langtoft's eyes, the two accounts might have appeared as equally reliable. Neither could thus be dismissed altogether. He was thus forced to invent a second Viking invasion in order to include both in his chronicle.[16] The brief mention of Guy's feat in the Auchinleck *Chronicle* might suggest that by the beginning of the fourteenth century, this episode was not only extremely popular, but also perceived as undeniably historical. [17]

> In Aþelstonis time, ich vnderstond,
> Was Gij of Warwike in Jnglond
> & for Aþelston he dede a bateyle
> Wiþ a geaunt gret, saunfaile.
> Þe geaunt hiȝt Colbro[n]d,
> Gy him slouȝ wiþ his hond.
> At Winchester þe bataile was don
> & seþþe dede Gij neuer non.
> Seuen ȝer king Aþelston
> Held þis iche kingdom. (ll. 1663-72)

In the Middle Ages, historical accounts were not conceived as factual lists of subsequent events, but rather as meaningful narratives relevant to a contemporary audience.[18] Therefore, the deeds of legendary English heroes might have served the purpose of staging fourteenth-century baronial preoccupations. In spite of their pretence of historicity, the world populated by Guy of Warwick, Horn and Beues of Hamtoun is in fact not Anglo-Saxon, but rather thirteenth and fourteenth century England.[19]

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[16] Rouse, 'The Romance of Anglo-Saxon Past', p. 58.
[17] Rouse, 'The Romance of Anglo-Saxon Past', p. 59.
[18] Rouse, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 54.
[19] Rouse, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 55.

As emphasised in the previous chapter, national identity is nourished by a common language, history, as well as by a sole culture. Since romances serve the function of promoting the values that are perceived as foundational in a given society, any collection deliberately conceived to foster a sense of national identity must necessarily be characterised by the prominence of history as much as by that of heroes and kings. The Auchinleck Manuscript proves an extraordinarily rich anthology of Middle English verse romances; therefore, it has been regarded as evidence of the contemporary interest for the English national identity on the grounds of the pre-eminence enjoyed by this literary genre. Nevertheless, a close analysis of the poems involved reveals a rather nuanced scenario. Three texts reputedly belonging to the romance category in fact derive from Breton *lais* (*Sir Degare, Lay le Freine, Sir Orfeo*).[20] Half the remaining romances belongs to several different traditions ranging from the Matter of France – *Roland and Vernagu* and *Otuel a Kniȝt* – to the Matter of Britain – *Of Arthour and of Merlin*. Some of these texts were simply so popular in the later Middle Ages that a number of distinct redactions appear in different vernaculars (*Amis and Amiloun, Floris and Blancheflour* as well as *The Seven Sages of Rome*). Yet, one third of the Auchinleck romances do belong to what has tentatively been defined as the 'Matter of England': *Guy of Warwick*, *Reinbroun, Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Horn Childe & Maiden Rimnild* and *King Richard*. The characteristically multifaced nature of these romances might demonstrate the limits inherent in identifying a definite set of their relevant traits. Although it might be impossible to produce a straightforward definition of 'Matter of England', in the context of the Auchinleck Manuscript, it might correspond to a sub-corpus of texts explicitly related to England not only in terms of historical setting, but also of the hero's avowed identity. The selection of these texts might well have been prompted by their popularity at the beginning of the fourteenth century; however, it might also be revealing of a patron's patriotic taste – if not of that of a whole social class – for anything English.

[20] As stressed by Burrow, the distinction between romance and lay seems all but straightforward, as the word in itself was used merely to identify a poem delivered with a musical accompaniment. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and their Work*, p. 75.

The romances about Guy of Warwick and Beues of Hamtoun appear direct translations and reworkings of extant Anglo-Norman originals, whereas for *Horn Childe* and *King Richard* the presence of Anglo-Norman source texts is still widely debated. Nevertheless, although at least some of these texts do not appear to have been first conceived in Middle English, they still belong to insular culture, as they are not translations of French romances, but rather original productions written in England in the previous century, in the vernacular used by the local aristocracy. The preoccupations emerging from these romances appear to be attuned to those of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy, thus reinforcing the idea that the connection between texts and social class was not restricted to the language used, but rather extended to the level of content. Therefore, it might come as no surprise that their fourteenth-century redactions were not merely translated into a different vernacular, but rather consistently reworked and updated. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the baronial wars, the turbulent realm of Edward II that ultimately led to his deposition, the loss of the Holy Land, the unresolved conflict with Scotland, as well as the increasingly tense relationship with France had certainly provoked a profound change in English politics. The baronial preoccupations must have changed accordingly and the use of Middle English cannot but testify to a new nationalistic stand. Significantly, even those romances that are strongly rooted in continental traditions, such as *Of Arthour and of Merlin, Roland and Vernagu, Otuel a Kniȝt*, appear to have been reworked in order not only to suit the taste of an English fourteenth-century audience, but also to provide English literature with models of martial prowess and ideal kingship on which the English heroes will be sketched.

The Auchinleck Manuscript seems to have been conceived as a selection of Middle English texts aimed at providing shared historical roots, an exclusively English epos and literary tradition. The parade of English legendary heroes and kings characterising the Auchinleck Manuscript might all too well demonstrate the extent to which their portraits were masterfully (re)shaped in order to define the traits of the English ideal Christian knight and leader. The following sections will thus be devoted to the analysis of these traits in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, *Horne Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, *Beues of*

Hamtoun as well as *Guy of Warwick* in order to understand their relevance to the identification of an English national identity.

4.1 A Contended Legendary Ancestor: King Arthur

In such an encompassing compilation of romances about heroes and kings, the legendary Arthur could certainly not be excluded. The roughly 9,760 lines covering the early years of Arthur's reign make *Of Arthour and of Merlin* the second longest romance in the Auchinleck Manuscript, thus possibly implying that it was intended to hold centre stage in the collection.[21] *Of Arthour and of Merlin* follows *Beues of Hamtoun* in Booklet 5, which is the largest extant booklet of the whole collection.[22] Significantly, it is preceded by the second largest booklet, Booklet 4, containing the two romances about Guy of Warwick and that about his son Reinbroun.[23] No filler appears to conclude Booklet 4, as though the two booklets were conceived as a whole aimed at creating some sort of romantic core. *Of Arthour and of Merlin* is thus the concluding poem of the longest sequence of romances uninterrupted by fillers. This Middle English rendition of the story of Arthur and Merlin survives in two distinct redactions: the earlier and longer A-redaction solely represented by the Auchinleck version and the later B-redaction, which survives in four manuscripts: the fifteenth-century Lincoln's Inn Library, Hale MS 150, whose text corresponds to lines 1-1,902 of the Auchinleck, the late fifteenth-century Bodleian Library MS 21880 (Douce 236) approximately containing lines 28-1,834 of the Auchinleck, the seventeenth-century British Library Additional MS 27879 (Percy Folio) containing the first 2,160 of the Auchinleck and the fifteenth-century London, British Library, Harley MS 6223, containing 62 lines approximately corresponding to the first 67 lines of the Auchinleck.[24] William Holland's study of the textual relationships between the extant manuscripts reveals that all versions are characterised by the extensive use of formulas and repetitions. All versions are in

[21] The longest romance in the Auchinleck Manuscript is *Guy of Warwick*: the combination of the section in couplets with that in stanzas amounts to about 10,510 lines.
[22] Booklet 5 is characterised by 11 folders and 84 folios.
[23] Booklet 4 is characterised by 9 folders and 72 folios.
[24] *Of Arthour and of Merlin, vol. 2,* edited by O.D. Macrae-Gibson, London: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 35-44.

octosyllabic couplets based on four-stress verses, further divisible into two-stress half-lines. The second half-line – like the second line of a couplet – usually contains predictable formulas of completion. This formulaic structure has been used as evidence not only of possible oral delivery, but also of a specific tradition amongst the texts. As for the former, the text's heavily formulaic nature does not exclusively imply that it was conceived for live performances. These formulas might rather have been part of a stock of conventional expressions available to poets and scribes in order to 'lighten the burden of translation or composition'.[25] As for the latter, an in-depth analysis of the same passages in different versions reveals that the variations are so numerous and meaningful that any direct relationship within the extant manuscripts can hardly be assumed.[26] To complicate the matter further, the similarities do not solely involve diction, but rather extend to the internal thematic organisation of the texts. Therefore, any attempt to reconstruct a *stemma codicum* only relying on the similarities of formulas would be undermined by the romances' formulaic nature.[27] Yet another hypothesis should be considered: these versions might derive from now lost Middle English redactions, thus possibly implying that the extant texts are but a small fraction of the original number of witnesses. Should this be the case, *Of Arthour and of Merlin* would be a rather popular romance.

Significantly though, all later redactions of the text approximately cover the first thirteen folios of the Auchinleck version (folio 201rb – folio 213va), which are also the most heavily annotated by later readers. This first section exclusively focuses on Merlin's early years and his role in Uther's coronation. King Arthur is never mentioned as his conception is only reported on folio 215v. From the very beginning, the Auchinleck redaction thus proves substantially different from the later versions. A red rubric reading 'Of Arthour and of Merlin' has been added at a later stage at the top of folio 201r, outside the standard ruling of the page, thus undoubtedly making it the title chosen by the Auchinleck redactor for his version of the Arthurian legend. The emphasis on the role played by Arthur also appears to differ from that of the possible sources used by the Auchinleck redactor. *Of*

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[25] William E. Holland, 'Formulaic Diction and the Descent of a Middle English romance', *Speculum*, 48 (1973), p. 95.
[26] Holland, 'Formulaic Diction', p. 105.
[27] Holland, 'Formulaic Diction', p. 105.

Arthour and of Merlin seems in fact to derive mainly from the anonymous early thirteenth-century French prose romance *Estoire de Merlin,* as well as from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* and possibly from its subsequent translations by Wace and Laȝamon.

The French text is characterised by a first part – also known as *Estoire de Merlin* – narrating the story of Merlin and his role in Uther's rise to power and a second part – *Les Premiers Faits du Roi Arthur* – reporting the first years of Arthur's reign.[28] The *Estoire de Merlin* opens with a council of demons discussing possible ways of inflicting suffering on humankind. This otherworldly dimension seems perfectly suited to the context of the Lancelot-Grail Cycle, where the religious undertones pervade the whole narrative. Although the exceptionality of Arthur's birth and deeds is not questioned in the Auchinleck redaction, the plan on which the story unfolds seems more earthly and less transcendental. The Auchinleck redactor appears in fact to have subverted the structure of the first part of the French cycle by opening his romance with the political crisis generated by Costaunce's death and the succession of his elder son, the weak Costentine.[29] This romance will be primarily about Arthur and consequently about the network of allusions to the contemporary political debate around succession rights and ideal kingship. Only afterwards will it deal with Merlin, whose role as king's counsellor would reinforce the importance of good advisors for the stability of the realm.

For the first part of the story, the Auchinleck redactor seems to have closely followed in Geoffrey of Monmouth's footsteps, by providing Arthur's rise to power with a solidly authoritative historical background. From Merlin's introduction into the narrative onwards, the main source may have been the French Vulgate Cycle. Although it is impossible to determine what version of the *Estoire de Merlin* the Auchinleck redactor had in mind, his statement in the prologue has been interpreted as evidence of a direct translation from a French source.[30] After all, in William Holland's words, 'What

[28] The Lancelot-Grail Cycle is characterised by 6 different texts: The *Estoire del Saint Graal*, the *Estoire de Merlin*, *Les Premiers Faits du Roi Arthur*, *Lancelot du Lac*, the *Queste del Saint Graal* and the *Mort le roi Artu*.
[29] Unless otherwise specified all names are quoted according to the Auchinleck most common spelling.
[30] 'It is impossible to be certain at any point exactly what form of the source the AM [*Of Arthour and of Merlin*] poet knew, and all discussion of changes which he appears to have made are therefore subject to reservation. Particularly is this so where he seems to have added material; his source was evidently fuller than any available version of it at one or two points, so it may well have been so at others. Nevertheless, since AM differs far more from LeM [*Lestoire de Merlin*] than any of the versions of it which I have seen do from each other, the majority of the differences are probably due to

scribe, copying a tale already written in English, would add his own remark that he is about to write in English?'[31] However, prologues presenting the author's linguistic intentions seem to have been rather formulaic at the beginning of the fourteenth century. For instance, in the prologue to his *Chronicle,* Robert Mannyng de Brunne similarly claims to be writing in Middle English for the sake of the 'lewed' who cannot understand French, let alone Latin.

> Lordynges that be now here,
> if e wille listene &lere
> All the story of Inglande
> als Robert Mannyng wryten it fand,
> &on Inglysch has it schewed,
> not for þe lerid bot for þe lewed,
> ffor þo þat in þis land[e] wone
> þat þe Latyn no Frankys cone,
> ffor to haf solace &gamen
> In felawschip when þai sitt samen. (ll. 1-10)[32]

The 'symple speche' envisaged by Mannyng appears to have been an almost obvious choice to fulfil the educational intent of his *Chronicle*: if Mannyng's historical undertaking was meant to instruct, it should be entirely comprehensible for his intended audience.[33] The same point is also made in the prologue to an almost contemporary history of the world originally written in the North of England. The author of the *Cursor Mundi* justifies his linguistic choice with his love for the 'lede of Engelande', thus clearly associating the act of translating with that of instructing his fellow nationals.[34]

> Ofter haly kirkis state.
> Þis ilk*e* boke ys tr*an*slate.
> Vn-til Ingeles tonge to rede.
> For þe loue of englis lede.
> Englis lede of engelande.
> Þe co*m*mune for til vnderstande.
> Frenche rimes here I. rede.
> Co*m*munely in iche a stede.
> Þat mast ys worþ for frenche man. (ll. 231-9)[35]

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the AM poet, and an analysis of his literary practice based on this assumption will be sound generally, if not in every detail.' McGrae Gibson, pp. 7-8.

[31] Holland, 'Formulaic Diction', p. 94.

[32] Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *The Chronicle*, edited by Idelle Sullens, Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996.

[33] Coleman, 'Strange Rhyme', p. 1223.

[34] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *The Idea of the Vernacular*, p. 267.

[35] *Cursor Mundi*, pp. 20-2.

Significantly, the prologue to *Of Arthour and of Merlin* openly states its educational intent.[36] Literacy in French and Latin appears of utmost importance to keep oneself away from sin. Since in the early fourteenth century a large part of insular written production was probably in either Anglo-Norman or Latin regardless of the subject, the knowledge of both languages could certainly bring several advantages.

Childer þat ben to boke ysett
In age hem is miche þe bett
For þai mo witen & se
Miche of Godes priuete
Hem to kepe & to ware
Fram sinne & fram warldes care,
& wele ysen ȝif þai willen
Þat hem no þarf neuer spillen -
Auauntages þai hauen þare
Freynsch & Latin eueraywhare. (ll. 9-18)

Yet, the poet restrains himself from talking too extensively about the two languages already enjoying literary status and shifts his focus on English. Just like Mannyng, he sets out to write in English for the sake of common people who cannot understand any other language.

Of Freynsch no Latin nil y tel more
Ac on J[n]glisch ichil tel þerfore
Riȝt is þat J[n]glische vnderstond
Þat was born in Jnglond.
Freynsche vse þis gentil man
Ac euerich Jnglische Jnglische can;
Mani noble ich haue yseiẏe
Þat no Freynsche couþe seye,
Biginne ichil for her loue
Bi Ihesus leue þat sitt aboue
On Inglische tel mi tale -
God ous sende soule hale. (ll. 19-30)

Despite considerable linguistic debate, authority still appear to rest with Latin. This is in fact the language used by Merlin not only to defend his mother on trial, 'Þo þai com bifor Merlin | He asked hem al on Latyn' (ll. 1565-6), but also to prompt Gawain and the other young barons to intervene in crucial passages in the narrative, 'Þurth leters writen in Latin' (l. 8560).[37]

'& seþþen Ywain mi cosyn
Þurth leters writen in Latin

[36] Similar arguments can also be detected in the late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century *Northern Homily Cycle*. John Scattergood, 'Validating the High Life in *Of Arthour and of Merlin* and *Kyng Alisaunder*', *Essays in Criticism*, 54 (2004), p. 331.
[37] For further insight into the possible multilingualism of the Auchinleck Manuscript see, Thea Summerfield, '"And She Answered in hir Language": Aspects of Multilingualism in the Auchinleck Manuscript', in *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain (c. 1066-1520)*, edited by Judith A. Jefferson and Ad Putter, Turnhout: Brepols, 2013, pp. 241-58.

Þurth a page also riȝt,
& mi moder þurth a kniȝt,
& y no couþe non of þo þre
Neuer seþþen after yse.' (ll. 8559-64)

One last thought should be given to the metrical form chosen for the Middle English rendition of the Arthurian romance. In Mannyng's *Chronicle* the relationship between content and metre has been extended to the form perceived as the most appropriate for a given language. French literature has developed its privileged form: the prose romance. What still remains to be seen is which form would be the most appropriate for English literature.[38] The extant texts demonstrate that the natural choice for Middle English romances was poetry. In the Auchinleck Manuscript, texts in tail-rhyme stanzas smoothly alternate with those in couplets. The path for English poetry seems to have been marked. There is thus no trace of Mannyng's critical views on the risks associated with convoluted metrical forms.

If the evidence provided thus far seems somehow inconclusive in order to determine whether the Auchinleck *Of Arthour and of Merlin* is a poetic translation of a version of the French prose *Estoire de Merlin*, other aspects concerning the textual structure and layout might offer further insight into the genesis of this romance. What seems to be a matter of mere speculation is in fact a central issue in order to determine whether the Auchinleck redactor deliberately extended or omitted certain sections of his source text to sketch a portrait of the legendary king aligned with the concept of ideal kingship pervading the whole collection. Potential expansions and omissions would thus not be imputable to authorial incompetence in translating the French source, but rather to a precise choice of recasting the French narrative into a different set of values,[39] as well as improving on the consistency of the story.[40]

Just as the French source text is divided into sections preceded by small vignettes and decorated initials (see for instance the fourteenth-century manuscripts London, British Library, Add. 10292 and

[38] Mannyng's reflections on the most appropriate form for the English has been discussed in Chapter 1.8, pp. 76-7.
[39] David Burnley, 'Of Arthour and of Merlin' in *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, edited by W.R.J. Barron, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001, pp. 86-7.
[40] The majority of the episodes omitted from the French source are in fact digressive in nature. Venetia Bridges, *Medieval Narratives of Alexander the Great: Transnational Texts in England and France*, Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2018, p. 219.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Français 110) so the Auchinleck redaction is characterised by 51 sections preceded by decorated large initials except for the first one which, in accordance with the general style of the manuscript, is preceded by a now lost illumination. The text divisions outlined by these rubricated initials appear to fall into five different categories: story connectors, seasonal settings, attention catchers, temporal markers, source related openings. Not all these types are evenly distributed, as seasonal settings, story connectors and temporal markers seem to be scattered throughout the text, whereas attention catchers and source related openings appear to characterise specific sections of the narrative.

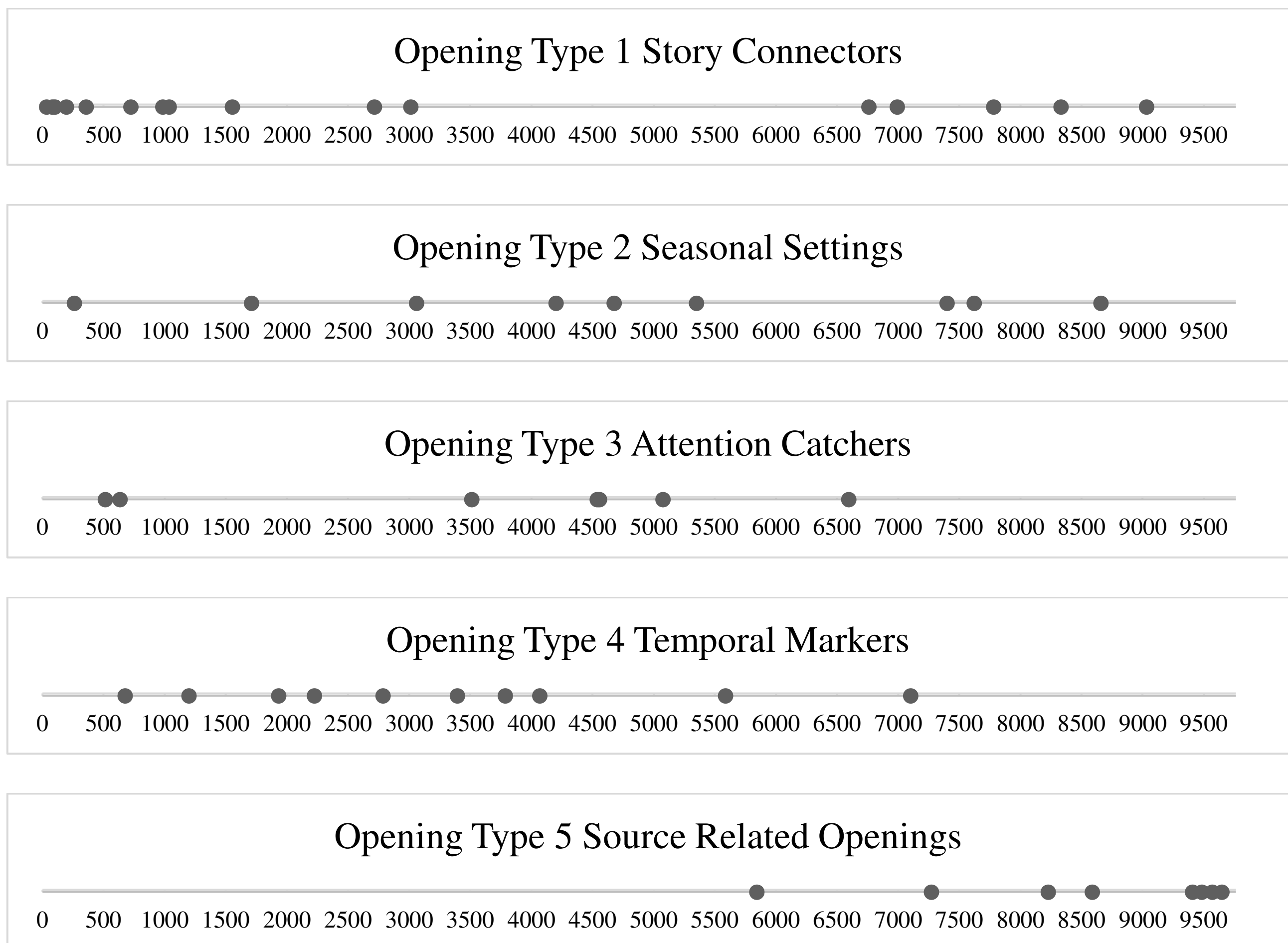

Figure 7. Distribution of the different opening types

Attention catchers, story connectors and temporal markers are certainly part of the customary repertoire of romance opening expressions.[41] Seasonal settings and source related headpieces might

[41] Attention catchers as well as first-person's comments directly addressing the audience could be considered marks of real or fictional oral delivery. *Kyng Alisaunder*, edited by G. V. Smithers, London: Oxford University Press, 1951, p. 28.

conversely convey additional meanings. Seasonal headpieces appear amongst the stylistic devices outlined by Smithers as typical of epic poetry and would mainly serve the purpose of interspersing epic deeds and violent battles with courtly interludes.[42] This rhetorical device is not unique to *Of Arthour and of Merlin,* but characterises another poem from the Auchinleck Manuscript, *Kyng Alisaunder*, thus essentially confirming the presence of intertextual allusions across the Auchinleck collection not only in terms of content, but also in terms of style.[43] Admittedly though, these seasonal headpieces are not a Middle English innovation. They conversely appear to derive from lyric poetry, as well as from French and classic epics.[44] Venetia Bridges expands on Smithers's point by emphasising that since these seasonal openings appear scarcely varied and mainly characterised by a simplification of the French source, they cannot serve other purposes except that of marking the beginning of new sections.[45] The seasonal settings in *Of Arthour and of Merlin* are not consistently placed in the same positions as those in the French source text.

> Che fu a lentree de mai au tans nouel que cil oisel chantent cler & seri & toute riens de ioie enflambe & que cil bos & cil uergier sont flori & cil pre rauerdisent derbe nouele & menue & est entrmellee de diuerses flors qui ont douce odour & ces douces aigues reuienent en lor canel & les amors noueles font resbaudir ces valles & ces puceles qui ont les cuers iolis & gais por la douchor del tans qui renouele.[46]

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[42] The others being: three types of epic similes (warriors compared to beasts, blows figured as the work of craftsmen, natural or elemental imagery), metaphors, irony and innuendo, foreshadowing, hyperbole, understatement, taunts addressed to an adversary in battle, laments for dead comrades, references to the honour of his own or his adversary's family, subjective comments by the author, descriptions of battles in terms of single combats, miscellaneous *loci communes*, verbal formulae. *Kyng Alisaunder*, pp. 28; 31.

[43] Seasonal openings, similarities in style, as well as close dialect features have been used to corroborate the hypothesis of a common authorship of both texts. Although there is still no agreement on whether the evidence provided is sufficient to confirm a common authorship, it could still at least demonstrate the presence of a 'local tradition of romance writing'. Scattergood, 'Validating the High Life', p. 323.

[44] Bridges, *Medieval Narratives of Alexander the Great,* p. 211; Scattergood, 'Validating the High Life', p. 324.

[45] Bridges also notes that the seasonal headpieces contained in *Of Arthour and of Merlin* are less varied than those scattered throughout *Kyng Alisaunder*'s narrative. Bridges, *Medieval Narratives of Alexander the Great*, p. 211. In the introduction to his edition of *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, Macrae-Gibson analyses this same passage and concludes that: 'That [headpiece] at 4675-80 rests to a considerable extent on a passage at the corresponding point of LeM […] The piece in AM stands, like the others, as a separated lyrical insertion, in function somewhat like a chapter-heading verse.' Macrae-Gibson, p. 70.

[46] *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances, vol. 2, Lestoire de Merlin*, edited by H. Oskar Sommer, Washington: The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1908, p. 134. (henceforth *Lestoire de Merlin*) 'It was at the beginning of May, in the springtime when the birds sing clear and sweet and all things are kindled with joy, when the woods and gardens are in bloom and the meadows turn green again with new grass shoots and all kinds of sweet-smelling flowers among them, when smooth waters again flow in their beds and newly-awakened love gladdens youths and maidens whose hearts are made merry and gay by the sweetness of this time of renewal. *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation vol. 1, The History of the Holy Grail and The Story of Merlin*, edited by J. Lacy Norris and translated by Carol J. Chase and Rupert T. Pickens (respectively), New York: Garland, 1993, p. 240 (henceforth *The Story of Merlin*).

> Mirie is þentre of May:
> Þe foules make miri play,
> Maidens singgeþ & makeþ play,
> Þe time is hot & long þe day,
> Þe iolif niȝtingale singeþ
> In þe grene mede floures springeþ. (ll. 4675-80)

However, even when the passages are placed exactly at the same point in the narrative, the Middle English rendition retains a mere shadow of the elaborateness of its French source. Instead of sketching a *reverdie* symbolising renewal and rebirth, the Auchinleck redactor mechanically lists the characteristics customarily associated with spring: birds and ladies singing, blooming flowers, mild temperatures and longer days.[47] Given the complex network of allusions characterising these seasonal passages, the Auchinleck redactor might not have undertaken a mere translation / abridgement of the French original, but rather an all-encompassing *translatio* aimed at recasting this tradition into a different cultural context.[48]

If on the one hand these seasonal headpieces might seem self-standing units not necessarily related to the section they introduce, on the other they function as narrative devices aimed at evoking all allegorical significance associated with a particular time of the year. The characters are thus described as reacting to the seasonal changes in the natural landscape.[49] In romances, action is customarily set in spring or during Christian festivities in order to raise specific expectations in the audience. A knight who sets off on an adventure during winter cannot but raise suspicions. For instance, in the late fourteenth-century *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, despite the risks involved in facing a wintry northern landscape, Gawain famously leaves Arthur's court on 1 November. His mission is burdensome and urgent. His departure cannot be deferred any longer. The desolate wintry landscape perfectly mirrors Gawain's desperate state of mind. Given their scarcity and profound

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[47] *Joi* belongs to the specific vocabulary of troubadour *fin' amor*: 'non si tratta di semplice gioia, ma dell'insieme delle ineffabili sensazioni, fisiche e emotive, provocate dall'amore corrisposto e eventualmente realizzato.' [it is not mere joy, but rather the set of ineffable sensations, physical and emotional, triggered by reciprocated and eventually realised love.] (My translation) Paolo Gresti, *Antologia delle Letterature Romanze del Medioevo*, Bologna: Patron Editore, 2011, p. 160. As for the idea of renewal, the wording of this passage appears to be reminiscent of the troubadour tradition, see for instance the first stanza of William IX, Duke of Aquitaine's song 'Ab la douzor del temps novel'. Gresti, pp. 155-7.

[48] Since these few lines contain two scribal mistakes (*Mirie* is spelled *miirie*, whereas instead of *floures* the text reads *foules*), one might wonder whether in this specific instance, the scribe was coping the text from a version of the French *Estoire de Merlin* as well as simultaneously translating and recasting it into a different cultural background.

[49] *Kyng Alisaunder*, p. 36.

meaningfulness, winter openings deserve further attention. In *Of Arthour and of Merlin* the sole winter headpiece significantly functions as some sort of watershed in terms of textual disposition, as it represents the twenty-sixth opening out of 51.

> In time of winter alange it is:
> Þe foules lesen her blis,
> Þe leues fallen of þe tre,
> Rein alangeþ þe cuntre,
> Maidens leseþ here hewe,
> Ac euer hye louieþ þat be trewe. (ll. 4199-204)

In this passage, the Auchinleck redactor seems to have indulged in a free interpretation and expansion of the French text, which merely reads: 'il fesoit moult grant froit et il avoit bien gele'.[50] According to Smithers and others, this passage would reinforce the idea of the steadfastness of love as compared to the seasonal decline of nature, thus possibly implying the poet's awareness of the canons of love lyrics.[51] Yet, winter is also customarily associated with the transience of earthly life, so much so that in the roughly contemporary Harley lyric 'Wynter wakeneth al my care', the wintry setting triggers an intimate and melancholic reflection that ultimately leads to *timor mortis*.[52] Furthermore, this appears to be the sole literal reference to winter in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*. The three additional instances of the word are in fact used as synonyms for 'year' referring to the age of the characters ['Þo Merlin was fif winter eld' (l. 1189) 'He was of fiue winter eld' (l. 1215), 'He nas nouȝt tventi winter eld' (l. 4943)]. Proper winter references are not unprecedented in the Auchinleck Manuscript, particularly in romances; nevertheless, they usually convey the fervent tension towards the upcoming spring, or the victory of spring over winter, in the customary battle of seasons.[53] Significantly, in the only three instances in which winter stands for itself, it appears to function as a harbinger of upcoming hard times.[54] Considering the content of the following section, one might argue that this winter setting

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[50] *Lestoire de Merlin*, footnote 3, p. 124. 'it was bitter cold and everything was covered in ice' (my translation).

[51] *Kyng Alisaunder*, p. 36. Scattergood, 'Validating the High Life', p. 334. Macrae-Gibson, p. 71; Bridges, p. 223.

[52] 'Wynter wakeneth al my care; | Nou this leves waxeth bare. | Ofte Y sike ant mourne sare | When hit cometh in my thoht | Of this worldes joie: | Hou hit geth al to noht!' (ll. 1-6) *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript, Volume 2, Art. 52*, https://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/fein-harley2253-volume-2-article-52 [accessed on 18/11/2022]

[53] *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript,* ed. by Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron, Exeter: Liverpool University Press, 2007, p. 226.

[54] The three instances plus one ('midwinter') in which the word is mentioned properly can be detected in *Sir Tristrem* (l. 13), *Sir Orfeo* (l. 259), and *Amis and Amiloun* (ll. 1788; 1835 – 'midwinter'). Nevertheless, a similar use of the word

functions as an image of defeat and decay as well as of future unrest. Some fifty lines later, a messenger reaches King Urien's court at Norhant in order to inform the rebellious kings that the Saracens have invaded both Cornwall and the Orkneys and are ravaging these lands. The kings have not yet recovered from the defeat suffered at Arthur's hands that they are forced to take up arms again.

Seasonal headpieces might also provide further insight into the potential audience of such a collection. The primary function of the seasonal openings would in fact reside 'in defining the poet's relationship to his audience and its lifestyle, which he admires, though not without reservation'.[55] Their pervasiveness in *Of Arthour and of Merlin* as well as in *Kyng Alisaunder* might hence suggest an intended audience sharing the same set of values and the same high-life celebrated in the texts.[56] The extensive use of refined French-derived phrases might reinforce the idea that this manuscript was conceived to appeal to the aristocracy rather than to the wealthy middle class.[57]

The openings referring to written sources appear well into the second half of the romance and introduce the numerous lengthy battles in which Arthur faces the Saracens led by King Rion of Ireland. Venetia Bridges posits that since these references are generally not developed any further, they carry no additional meaning.[58] Nevertheless, some of them being in front position at the head of new sections might imply that the subsequent account was intended to be perceived as historically reliable. Furthermore, since the account of the succession crisis generated by the death of King Costaunce seems to have been drawn from the *Historia Regum Britanniae,* a text universally acknowledged as authoritative, the general perception of the narration cannot but have been influenced by the expectations raised in its first part. The Auchinleck redactor also appears to have put much effort into trying to combine his different sources to maintain a degree of consistency throughout the narrative. For instance, in the French *Estoire de Merlin*, the names of King

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'winter' would not necessarily imply a common authorship – which has conversely been excluded – but rather the knowledge of romance conventions in a specific area of the country.

[55] Scattergood, 'Validating the High Life', p. 342.

[56] Scattergood, 'Validating the High Life', p. 341.

[57] Summerfield, 'Aspects of Multilingualism in the Auchinleck Manuscript', p. 256.

[58] Bridges, *Medieval Narratives of Alexander the Great,* p. 220.

Costaunce's sons are Maines, Pandragon, and Uters, whereas in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, as well as in Wace's translation, the king's sons are called Constantine, Auriliis and Uther Pendragon.[59] To resolve the inconsistencies in his sources, the Auchinleck redactor conflates two names in one person, by explaining that Costentine, the king's eldest son, was in fact also called King Moyne because he previously was a monk. Although in the *Estoire de Merlin* as well King Maines is described as a monk, his previous occupation cannot be etymologically inferred from his name, as the Old French word for monk is 'moine' / 'muine'. 'Maines' apparently only meant 'great'.[60]

The numerous references to written sources are not new to the Middle English rendition of the Arthurian story, as the French *Estoire de Merlin* also appears to make extensive use of this narrative device. These literary references do not exclusively appear at the beginning of new sections, but rather punctuate the whole romance. Admittedly, they might also be a tool at the poet's disposal to find appropriate rhyming couplets, such as 'bok(e)' / '(of; a)tok(e)'; 'boke' / 'loke'; 'boke' / 'broke'; 'boke' / 'bispoke'; 'oke' / 'boke'. Nevertheless, 10 out of 34 instances of the word 'book' are not in end-position, thus possibly implying that the rhyming scheme was not the sole reason behind this choice. Furthermore, this redactor does not merely use the word 'book' to identify the nature of his sources, but he also refers to them as 'gest(es)', 'romaunce', 'tale' and 'br(o)ut'.[61] An in-depth analysis of their distribution in the Auchinleck corpus demonstrates that 'gest(es)', 'romaunce' and 'tale' are almost interchangeably used, whereas the word 'br(o)ut' is specifically used to identify a

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[59] The passage devoted to the King's sons corresponds to the Book VI.93 in the *Historia Regum Britannia*. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 118-9. In Wace's account their names are rendered as Constant, Aurelius and Uther. 'Treis vallez en out, le plus grant | Fist li reis apeler Constant. | A Wincestre le fist nurrir, | E lal fist muine devenir. | Emprés fu nez Aurelius, | Si surnuns fu Ambrosius. | Derainement Uther nasqui, | E ce fu cil que plus vesqui.' (ll. 6445-52) 'He had three sons from her [the queen]; the king called the eldest Constant, had him brought up at Winchester, and there made him become a monk. Next came Aurelius, known as Ambrosius. The last born was Uther, and he was the one who lived the longest' *Wace's Roman de Brut: A History of the English*, edited and translated by Judith Weiss, Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1999, pp. 162-3.

[60] *DMF*, http://zeus.atilf.fr/dmf/ [accessed on 21/10/2022] It might also have been a misreading on this redactor's part.

[61] Melissa Furrow carries out an analysis of the words used to define the texts or their sources in the Auchinleck Manuscript. 'Works that call themselves and/or the sources *gests* are *Amis and Amiloun* (with 11 instances), the stanzaic *Guy of Warwick* (7) *The King of Tars* (5) *Arthur and Merlin* (2) *King Richard* (2) *Horn Childe* (1); works that call themselves and/or their sources romances are *Arthur and Merlin* (8) *Bevis of Hampton* (2) *Richard* (2) the stanzaic *Guy of Warwick* (1), perhaps *Otuel* ("[a]s we finden in romaunse write" could be a reference to language, but the phrasing is effectively the same as "as we rede in gest").' Furrow, '*Chanson de Geste* as Romance in England', pp. 66-7.

history of England beginning with Brutus' arrival.[62] As expected, the popular English chronicle is only mentioned in *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* 'Men mow it finde jn Englische | As þe Brout it telleþ, ywis' (ll. 3-4), as well as in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, 'So it is writen in þe brout' (l. 538), 'So ich in þe brout yfinde', 'So ous seyt þe brout forsoþ' (l. 3486), 'For in þe brut ich it lerne' (l. 3675), 'Þe brut þerof is mi waraunt' (l. 5228), 'So ich in þe brut finde' (l. 5633).

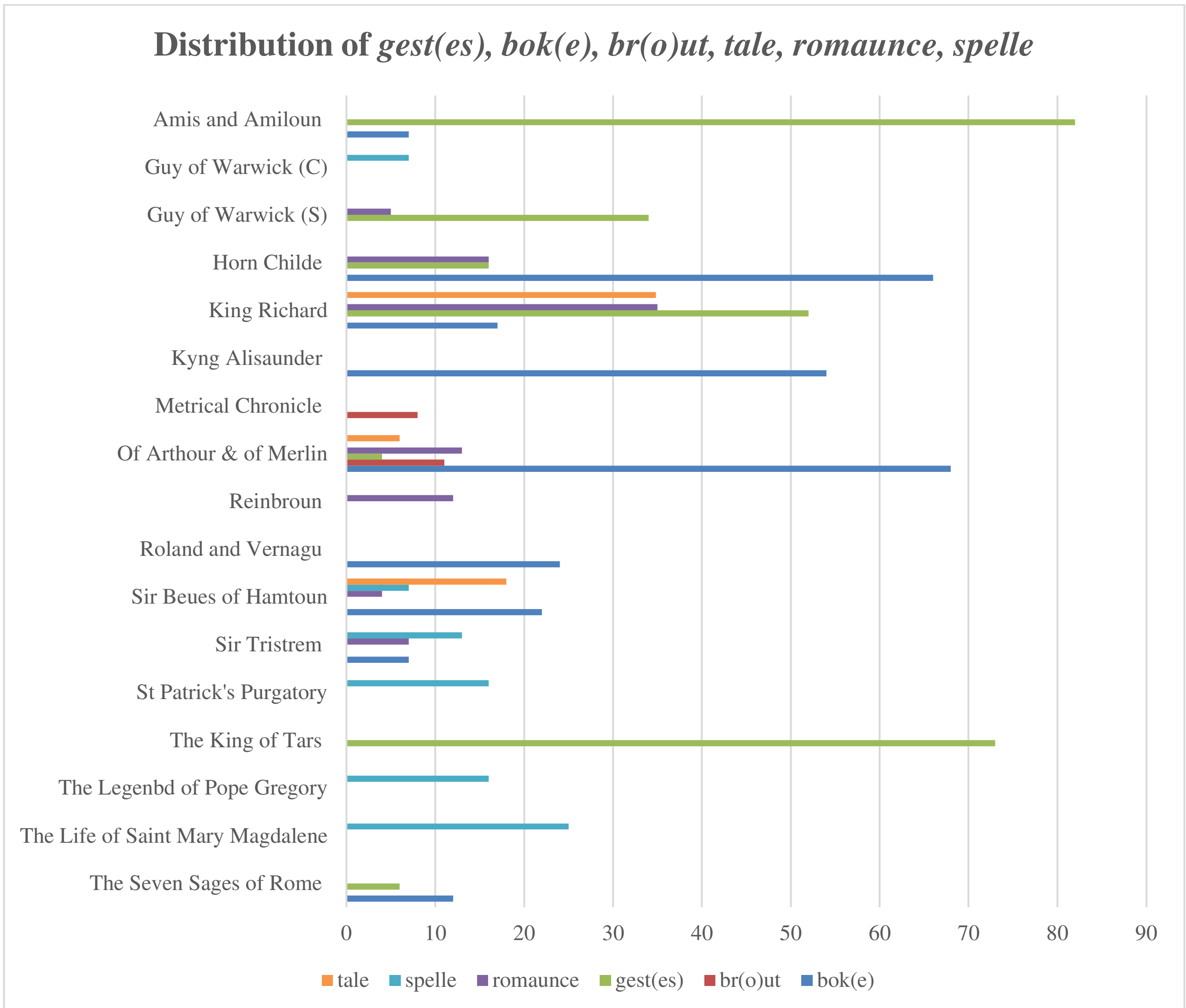

Figure 8. Distribution of 'gest(es)', 'bok(e)', 'br(o)ut', 'tale', 'romance', 'spelle'

It is impossible to determine which version of the *Brut* the Auchinleck redactor had in mind; nevertheless, supposing that some editorial choices were made by the scribe responsible for the transcription (and possible reworking) of both texts, his statement at the beginning of *The Anonymous*

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[62] This aspect will be further investigated in Section 4.2.

Short English Metrical Chronicle might reveal a possible source in a different language. His claim that the following chronicle will somehow offer an English version of the *Brut* might well be a customary statement, but it might also imply that the source text was either in Latin or in Anglo-Norman.

The Auchinleck redactor's insistence on the use of reliable written sources might also have been prompted by the speculations around the historicity of the accounts of Arthur's realm and deeds. The twelfth century chronicler William of Malmesbury deplores the extent to which Arthur's life has been made the subject of conjectures and nonsensical legends, instead of being treated with the deference befitting such a great figure.

> Hic est Arthur de quo Britonum nugae hodieque delirant; dignus plane quem non fallaces somniarent fabulae, sed ueraces praedicarent historiae, quippe qui labantem patriam diu sustinuerit, infractasque ciuium mentes ad bellum acuerit (I.8).[63]

Wace as well is concerned with the dissemination of legends featuring King Arthur. He never doubts the king's existence, but he believes that subsequent storytellers might have invented some details and exaggerated others to the detriment of the reliability of their accounts.[64] Laȝamon takes on Wace's comment, but instead of ascribing these inaccuracies to the desire of bards to improve on their account, he ascribes them to the Britons' love of their legendary king.[65] Since any poet apparently

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[63] 'This is that Arthur of whom the trifling of the Britons talks such nonsense even today: a man clearly worthy not to be dreamed of in fallacious fables, but to be proclaimed in veracious histories, as one who long sustained his tottering country and gave the shattered minds of his fellow citizens an edge for war.' William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, pp. 26-7.

[64] 'Que pur amur de sa largesce, | Que pur poüesce, | En cele grant pais ke jo di, | Ne sai si vus l'avez oï, | Furent les merveilles pruvees | e les aventures truvees | Ki a fable sunt aturnees: | Ne tut folie ne tut saveir. | Tant unt li cunteür cunté | E li fableür tant fablé | Pur lur cuntes enbeleter, | Que tut unt fait fable sembler.' (ll. 9785-98) [In this time of great peace I speak of – I do not know if you have heard of it – the wondrous events appeared and the adventures were sought out which, whether for love of his generosity, or for fear of his bravery, are so often told about Arthur that they have become the stuff of fiction: not all lies, not all truth, neither total folly nor total wisdom. The raconteurs have told so many yarns, the story-tellers so many stories, to embellish their tales that they have made it all appear fiction]. *Wace's Roman de Brut*, pp. 246-7; Françoise Le Saux, 'Wace's Roman de Brut', in *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, edited by W. R. J. Barron, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001, p. 20.

[65] 'Þis wes þat ilke bord ‖ þat Bruttes of ȝelpeð. | and sugeð feole cunne lesinge ‖ bi Arðure þan kinge. | Swa deð auer-alc mon ‖ þe oðer luuien con; | ȝif he is him to leof ‖ þenne wule he liȝen | and suggen on him wurð-scipe ‖ mare þenne he beon wurðe. | ne beo he no swa luðer mon; þat his freond him wel ne on. | Æft ȝif on uolke feond-scipe arereð. | an æuer-æi time; bitweone twon monnen. | me con bi þan læðe; lasinge suggen. | þeh he weore þe bezste mon ‖ þe æuere æt at borde. | þe mon þe him weore lað ‖ him cuðe. last finden. | Ne al soh ne al les ‖ þat leod-scopes singeð. | ah þis is þat soððe ‖ bi Arðure þan kinge.' (ll. 11454-66) [This was that table of which the Britons boast, telling fables of many kinds about King Arthur. Each and every man who feels love for another does the same; if he is dear to him then he will lie and say more in praise of him that he is worthy of; there is no man so base that his friend will not wish him well. If likewise, anywhere at any time, enmity arises between two men, lies can be told about the one who is hated; even though he were the best man who ever ate at table, the man who hated him would be able to find fault with him. What minstrels sing is

felt entitled to rework the Arthurian myth according to circumstances, the Auchinleck redactor might have found it necessary to refer to written sources with a certain degree of authority in order to avoid any speculation concerning the historical plausibility of his redaction.

Though a consistently abridged version of the *Estoire de Merlin*, *Of Arthour and of Merlin* is a lengthy narrative in which the deeds of Arthur and Merlin intertwines with those of the most renowned knights of the Round Table. The romance opens with the succession crisis caused by Costaunce's death and the accession of his weak son, Costentine. The recurring Saracen invasions and the king's militarily inadequate response give his steward, Vortigern, the opportunity to usurp the throne. After having been crowned king, Vortigern plans the construction of a stronghold in Salisbury in order to defend himself from the constant unrest triggered by his usurpation. Yet, the stronghold mysteriously collapses every night. The king's clerks reveal that only the blood of a boy conceived by no man can make the structure stand. The clerks' suggestion triggers a long flashback narrating Merlin's conception and early years. The king's messengers succeed in finding the mysterious child. Merlin is admitted to the king's presence and reveals the truth about the collapsing stronghold: two dragons are fighting against each other under the newly constructed foundations. The outcome of this battle symbolises the upcoming downfall of Vortigern's realm. Shortly afterwards, the former king's brothers, Aurilis and Uther, now of age, come back to reclaim their throne. After a fierce fight, Uther manages to burn Vortigern's stronghold to the ground with him. He is immediately crowned king, but in the ensuing battle against the newly reinvigorated Danes, Aurilis is slain. Uther desperately falls in love with Ygerne, the wife of one of his barons. As Uther falls ill due to the unattainability of his love for Ygerne, Merlin helps him take the shape of her husband and trick her to lie with him. Arthur is conceived. Shortly after his birth, Merlin takes Arthur to Sir Antor, who is charged with his care. Upon Uther's death, the English barons cannot choose a successor. In spite of Arthur's drawing the marvellous sword from the stone, not all barons are ready to accept him

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not all truth nor all lies; but this is the truth about King Arthur.] Laȝamon, *Laȝamon's Brut*, pp. 588-9. Le Saux, 'Wace's Roman de Brut', p. 27.

unconditionally. Arthur is forced to fight on two fronts: on one side the rebellious barons, on the other the Saracens laying the country waste. The romance ends with Arthur's victory on King Rion of Ireland and with his betrothal to Guinevere.

From the very beginning, the poem shows an interest in the identification of the characteristics of good kingship as well as in the legal matters concerning royal succession. Although in the French source text King Costaunce is not abruptly killed by a Pict like in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, there is no trace of previous agreements between the king and his nobles on succession. In both accounts, the realm is suddenly leaderless and incapable of deciding on their new sovereign. The late king's eldest son is a monk, inherently unsuitable for the task, whereas his brothers are simply too young to take over. The legendary account is thus transformed into some sort of *speculum principis*, in which the king's role in bringing prosperity, unity and peace plays a pivotal role. Negative examples of bad kingship serve to define the attributes of the good one. Yet, the repertoire of disastrous sovereigns is crowded by tyrants as much as by weak kings, incapable of counselling themselves either due to their own nature or to their youth. It thus comes as no surprise that the theme of good and bad counsellors is also pervasive. Vortigern's treacherous conduct cannot but emphasise Merlin's loyalty to his king and country. In the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, the former king's steward, Vortigern, is in fact portrayed as blatantly treacherous and exclusively devoted to self-enrichment. He pretends to be willing to help Costaunce's eldest son and persuades him to accept the crown.

> Denique, cum nunc sic, nunc aliter contendissent, accessit Vortegirnus consul Gewisseorum, qui omni nisu in regnum anhelabat, et adiuit Constantem monachum illumque in haec uerba alluctus est: 'Ecce, pater tuus defunctus est et frates tui propter aetatem sublimari nequeunt, nec alium uideo in progenie tua quem in regem populus promoueret. Si igitur consilio meo adquiescere uolueris possessionemque meam augmentare, conuertam populum in affectum sublimandi te in regnum et ex tali habitu, licet ordo repugnet, te abstrahendi.' (VI.150-8)[66]

[66] 'After much disagreement Vortigern, earl of the Gewissei, eager to win the crown for himself, intervened by visiting the monk Constans and addressing him as follows: "Look, your father has died, your brothers are too young to succeed him and, in my opinion, there is no one else in your family that the people can make king. If you agree to follow my advice and increase my wealth, I shall induce them to be willing to crown you and divest you of your monkish habit, even against the rules of your order."' Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 118-9.

The French account is less explicit and implies that Vortigern passively participates in the assembly deliberating on Maines's succession; though utterly aware of the young king's unsuitability for the task, he agrees that his birth right should outweigh his fitness for the role. In the perennial controversy over legitimate succession, the right to rule is confirmed as inherited by blood.

> & constans fu moult uiex si ala de vie a mort & quand il fu mors si demanderent les gens du pais de qui il feroient signor du pais & roi. & li plusor sacorderent quil feroient roy le fil lor signor & il estoit iones mais il nestoit pas drois que il fesissent dautrui roy & lui laissier.[67]

The Middle English version is only slightly different, but the innovations introduced are deeply consequential. In an assembly reminiscent of that in which Henry I made his barons swear allegiance to his only surviving daughter, Matilda, King Costaunce asks his lords to accept his eldest son as his heir apparent.[68] No sudden assassination takes place, but a carefully planned act of succession. Since the king is taken by an illness from which he knows he will not recover, he makes arrangements for the future of his realm. He thus proves a model of good kingship.

> Þe King seyd to hem anon
> 'Lordinges,' he seyd 'lesse & mare,
> Out of þis warld y most fare;
> Þerfore y pray for loue o me
> For Godes loue & for charite
> When ich am dede & roten in clay
> Helpeþ mi childer þat ȝe may,
> & takeþ Costaunt mi neldest sone
> & ȝif him boþe reng & [c]rone
> & holdeþ him for ȝour lord euer mo.' (ll. 68-77)

A reflection on the desirable characteristics of a king can be detected in the barons' portrait of King Costentine. Though he gave his word that he would help the new king, Vortigern refuses to fight against the pagan invaders. The country is thus pillaged by Angys's army and the blame entirely falls

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[67] *Lestoire de Merlin*, p. 20. 'Constant was quite old, and in time he died. And when he was dead, the folk of the land asked whom they should make lord and king of the country. Many agreed that they would make the son of their overlord king. He was young, but it was not right to make anyone else king and leave him aside.' *The story of Merlin*, p. 177.

[68] In 1126, Henry I gathered his nobles and asked them to swear allegiance to his daughter. 'This year [1126] king Henry held his court at Christmas in Windsor. David, the king of Scots, was present, and all the most important men in England, ecclesiastics and laymen; and there he obtained an oath from archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, and all those thanes present, that England and Normandy should pass after his death into the possession of his daughter Æthelic [Matilda], wife of the late emperor of Germany.' *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, p. 256.

upon the king.[69] In the barons' eyes, the monk-king Costentine is undoubtedly too weak to rule. England is in desperate need of a stronger leader lest it be overcome by the invading army.

> Our princes speken wordes felle
> & seyd þat her king
> Nas bot a breþeling;
> ȝif Fortiger her prince ware
> 'No hadde we nouȝt hadde so miche care' (ll. 162-6)

> 'Sir, our king is bot a conjoun;
> Þo he seiȝe swerdes drawe
> To fle sone he was wel fawe.
> He no can conseil to no gode
> He is so adrad he is neiȝe wode.
> Whiles þou were in our þrome
> No were we neuer ouercome,
> Þat we forlorn at þis asaut
> Al we wite it þi defaut -
> So siggeþ al our pers.' (ll. 206-215)

Although the portrait of underserving kings might be considered almost customary, King Moyne's weaknesses seem somehow reminiscent of those of which Edward II is accused in *þe Simonie*. In this instance of estate satire, the king is blamed for his poor judgement and for his inclination towards favourites who are taking advantage of their position at court to despoil the country. The king cannot but be cursed for having failed his royal duties.

> Ac shrewedeliche, for soþe, hij don þe kinges heste:
> Whan eueri man haþ his part, þe king haþ þe leste.
> Eueri man is aboute to fille his owen purs,
> And þe king haþ þe leste part, and he haþ al þe curs,
> Wid wronge. (ll. 331-5)

Geoffrey of Monmouth as well emphasises the new king's inadequacy: he is a mere puppet in Vortigern's hands, 'Totum namque dispositioni eius regnum commissum fuerat, nec Constans, qui rex dicebatur, nisi pro umbra principis astabat. Nullius enim asperitatis, nullius iusticiae fuerat, nec a populo suo nec a uicinis gentibus timebatur'.[70] In spite of the current king's incompetence, Vortigern

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[69] Significantly, since the name Hengist had already been used to depict the perfect king in the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, the Auchinleck redactor might have been forced to leave the French name 'Anghis' essentially untranslated.

[70] 'The whole realm was in his power and Constans, the supposed king, was a mere puppet who lacked the sternness and judgement to instil fear in his people or their neighbours.' Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 118-9.

is well aware that the presence of a living ex-sovereign is a threat to a usurper; therefore, he declares that he cannot rule for as long as King Costentine lives.[71]

> 'Nil ich me noþing auentour
> To purchas a fole gret honour -
> ȝif Moyne ȝour king ded ware
> Ich wald ȝou help out of care.' (ll. 217-20)

Probably unsurprisingly, the barons agree to assassinate the king and install Vortigern on England's throne. This passage is certainly not an innovation introduced by this redactor, but faithfully translated from the *Estoire de Merlin*. Nevertheless, an early fourteenth-century English audience might have seen in these lines a veiled allusion to almost contemporary events. In the few months separating Edward II's deposition from his death, several plots aimed at restoring him on the throne had been uncovered. His mere existence was a threat to the new regime. On 21 September 1327, Edward of Caernarfon, king anointed, was slain. A solemn funeral followed. Just like the sumptuous ceremony arranged for the reburial of Arthur's earthly remains were masterfully staged to show the rebellious Welsh that their legendary leader was never to return, so Edward II's funeral was not solely intended to console a bereaved son, but also to prove to the former king's supporters that there was nothing left to fight for.[72]

The Middle English romance, possibly drawing again on its French source, reports that Vortimer pretended to be overcome with grief at the news of the King's death and immediately sentenced to death the material executers.

> He dede feche hors wel sket
> & teyed hem to her fet
> & dede hem drawe on þe pauement
> & hong hem after verrament. (ll. 381-4)

Once again, it is almost impossible to resist a parallel with fourteenth-century England.[73] Just like Vortigern, Roger Mortimer was acclaimed as a country saviour at the deposition of King Edward II.

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[71] 'Sil estoit mors & vous & li autre uolies que ie fuisse rois ie le seroie volentiers mais tant comme il viue ne le pus iou estre ne ne doi.' *Lestoire de Merlin*, p. 21 'If he were dead and if you and the others wanted me to be king, I would gladly do so, but as long as he lives I cannot and must not.' *The Story of Merlin*, p. 177.
[72] Ormrod, *Edward III*, pp. 66-7.
[73] This passage is also strongly reminiscent of that in *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronical* in which Eadric, after asking for his recompense for his role in murdering King Edmund, is disposed of by King Cnut. See Chapter 2.4.

Three years after the king's assassination, fortune had turned its back on him. Roger Mortimer was in fact captured at Nottingham Castle, summarily tried and sentenced to death on the grounds of his alleged participation in the assassination of the former king. On 29 November 1330, he was hanged as a common thief.[74] The story of King Uther's rise to power thus proves so imbued with political overtones that it could almost effortlessly be interpreted in the light of any contemporary events.

Since King Costentine's brothers are still too young and unexperienced, the barons choose Vortigern as their new king; 'We haue ȝou chosen our king' (l. 275). Vortigern has not been appointed regent until the surviving brothers are of age, but rather king in his own right. The bloodline of a steward has thus been allowed to prevail over that of an anointed king. Vortigern's realm is not to last: he rose in blood and will end in fire. The child fathered by no man discloses the meaning of the struggle between the two dragons unearthed in the digging of the foundations of Vortigern's new stronghold. In one of the most famous instances of political prophecy, Merlin reveals that the red dragon representing the usurper king will be burned to death by the white one, representing the rightful heir to the throne. Uther, Costaunce's youngest son, is coming to avenge the wrong he has suffered and to restore peace and justice in England. Yet, Uther's reign is in turn destined to end soon: the white dragon will outlive the red by three more days and then it will live no more.[75] In the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, the fight between the two dragons triggers a whole book of political prophecies of England's national destiny. Merlin's prophecies could be retrospectively looked at in order to interpret past and future events, thus essentially allowing a continuum in the history of the country: a sole history, a sole nation.[76] Significantly, Wace decided to exclude Merlin's prophecies from his translation, possibly in order to avoid jeopardising his royal patronage.

> Dunc dist Merlin les prophecies
> Que vus avez, ço crei, oïes,
> Des reis ki a venir esteient,

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[74] Ormrod, *Edward III*, pp. 90-3.
[75] '& tant que al blanc sailli fu & flambe parmi les narines & par la bouce si en arst le rous. Et quant il fu mors si se traist li blans arriere & se colcha & ne uesqui puis que .iij. iors.' *Lestoire de Merlin*, p. 33. 'But in the end, fire and flames shot out of the white dragon through its nose and mouth, and he burned the red one up. And when the red one was dead, the white one withdrew, lay down, and lived no more than three days longer.' *The Story of Merlin*, p. 184.
[76] W. R. J. Barron, 'General Introduction' in *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, edited by W. R. J. Barron, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001, p. xiv.

Ki la terre tenir deveient.
Ne vuil sun livre translater
Quant jo nel sai interpreter;
Nule rien dire nen vuldreie
Que si ne fust cum jo dirreie. (ll. 7535-42)[77]

Political prophecies were in fact controversial and sensitive to political changes.[78] Wace completed his *Roman de Brut* and presented it to Queen Eleonore of Aquitaine in 1155.[79] The timing is significant, as a new dynasty, that of the Plantagenets, had just established itself on the English throne. Henry II had become one of the most powerful European kings: the ruler of the Norman-Angevin empire. Less than one hundred years after the Norman invasion, England's prestige and expansion was at its highest. In the image of the Wheel of Fortune, Henry sat at the top of the wheel. He had achieved everything he could set his eyes upon. Just like King Arthur and Alexander the Great before him, Henry II's greatness was only to fade. Therefore, any allusion to the downfall of Arthur's kingdom might sound as a warning to Henry II of the possible consequences of too great a success, and thus cost Wace his royal patronage. However, this is not the sole political interpretation that Arthur's legend could offer. Geoffrey of Monmouth had in fact conceived a chronicle capable of legitimising the Norman conquest, since Brutus – like William the Conqueror – was not represented as a mere invader, but rather as a conqueror who brought a superior culture to England.[80] Wace's translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's historical undertaking recast the deeds of the Celtic leader into a courtly environment, essentially allowing the Anglo-Norman rulers 'to imagine themselves the rightful heirs to Arthurian power and chivalry'. [81] Its translation into the vernacular affected neither its reliability nor its authority.[82] Significantly, the Arthurian legend was so adaptable that it could be appropriated by oppressors and oppressed alike. Laȝamon could in fact use it to celebrate the heroic

[77] 'Then Merlin made the prophecies which I believe you have heard, of the kings who were to come and who were to hold the land. I do not wish to translate his book, since I do not know how to interpret it; I would not like to say anything, in case what I say does not happen.' *Wace's Roman de Brut,* pp. 190-1.
[78] Le Saux, 'Wace's *Roman de Brut*', p. 22.
[79] Le Saux, 'Wace's *Roman de Brut*', p. 18.
[80] W. R. J. Barron, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*', in *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, edited by W. R. J. Barron, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001, p. 17.
[81] Le Saux, 'Wace's *Roman de Brut*', p. 18.
[82] Le Saux, 'Wace's *Roman de Brut*', p. 19.

British resistance against foreign invaders.[83] The discriminating factor in all three chronicles appears to be the association with a specific language. Although Geoffrey of Monmouth claimed that he was merely translating an ancient book written in the British language, 'Britannici sermonis librum uetustissimum',[84] his chronicle immediately gained the status of authoritative source of English history. Undoubtedly, the linguistic choice must have played a pivotal role, as Latin was considered the language of science and culture *par excellence*. Wace's translation in the vernacular takes on further meanings: the desire to provide England with an illustrious past is supplemented with the celebration of courtly values. Anglo-Norman thus proves to be the language in which the new aristocracy of England could perceive themselves as not inferior to their French counterparts. Laȝamon's Old English-derived lexicon might conversely draw the audience's attention on an oppressed and yet noble population, celebrating a local English tradition independent of the Norman aristocracy.[85]

King Arthur's legend came down to fourteenth-century England with a remarkable pedigree of power legitimation and historical reliability. Since political prophecy could supplement the Arthurian legend with a further network of political allusions, it is hardly surprising that when it comes to the struggle between the dragons, the Auchinleck redactor seized the chance to enrich the account provided by his French source with additional symbolic details. In the *Estoire de Merlin*, the red dragon's gigantic size would symbolise Vortigern's equally immense power and wickedness. In the Middle English text, yet another feature is described: the red dragon's unnaturally long tail.

Þe red dragoun so strong in fiȝt
Bitokneþ þe and al þi miȝt,
Whiche þou hast procourd fro fer
Þe ded of Moyne þe riȝt air;
[…]
Þe white dragoun signifie
Þe riȝt air þat haþ envie
To þe þat heldeþ al his lond
Wiþ gret wrong vnder þine hond;
[…]

[83] W. R. J. Barron, 'Introduction to Chapter 2 – Dynastic Chronicles', in *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, edited by W. R. J. Barron, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001, p. 11.
[84] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 4-5.
[85] Françoise Le Saux, 'Laȝamon's Brut', in *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, edited by W. R. J. Barron, Cardiff: Cardiff University of Wales Press, 2001, p. 23.

Þe tayle of þe dragoun rede
Þat is so long & so vnrede
Signifieþe þe wicke stren
Þat schal com out of þi kin
& of þi wiues fader Angys
Þat schal be ded & lesen his pris;
His kin & eke þin
Schal don wo to Bretouns kin.
Þe heued of þe white tayle
Signifieþ gret conseyle
Þat schul held wiþ þe kinges blod
Of þe gentil men & gode. (ll. 1635-76)

In Merlin's view, this tail indicates the viciousness of Vortigern's offspring, thus essentially resuming the burning topic of inter-religious marriages raised a thousand lines before. In the Vulgate *Estoire de Merlin*, this issue does not go unmentioned, though it is limited to the sole royal marriage.

> Mais tant vous en puis ie bien dire que il firent tant que augis parla tant & dist que uertiger prinst la fille augis a feme. […] Mes moult furent dolant li crestien que uertiger prinst la fille augis si disent souuentes fois, de tel i ot quil auoit grant partie laisiet de sa creance por la feme qui ne creoit pas en ihesu crist.[86]

The king's disregarding his religious belief seems to pave the way for the upcoming downfall of his realm. The Auchinleck version, possibly closely following in Geoffrey of Monmouth's footsteps, emphasises the extent to which inter-religious marriages can have an ominous effect on the entire country.[87]

Hir tok to fere & to wiue,
& was curssed in al his liue
For he lete Cristen wedde haþen
& meynt our blod as flesche & maþen. (ll. 481-4)

In the *Historia Regum Britanniae,* the confusion arising from the mixing of two different religions almost amounts to a loss of identity. Merlin's assistance to Uther Pendragon is thus transformed into a campaign for the rescue of a nation's identity and mores.

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[86] *Lestoire de Merlin*, p. 23. 'I have heard so much said about this that I cannot tell you everything, but I can tell you this much, that Hengist spoke for so long and so persuasively that Vortigern took Hengist's daughter as his wife. […] I must not recount to you everything about Hengist and his deeds and estate, but all Christians grieved when Vortigern took Hengist's daughter, and it was quite often said that Vortigern ignored a great part of his religious belief because of the woman, who did not believe in Jesus Christ.' *The Story of Merlin*, p. 178.

[87] Significantly, in letter addressed to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Pope himself showed deep concerns for inter-religious marriages between Christian and Jewish: 'In November 1286, […] Pope Honorius reaffirmed the decisions of the Lateran Councils. He pointed out the evil effects of free intercourse between Jews and Christians in England (which he depicted in exaggerated terms), the pernicious consequences of the study of the Talmud, and the continual infringement of the canon laws on the subject. As though this were the most pressing business which confronted Christendom, he sternly called for counter-measures, including sermons and spiritual penalties, to end this improper state of affairs.' Cecil Roth, *A History of The Jews in England*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941, p. 77; Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 87.

> Non enim debebant pagani Christianis communicare nec intromitti, quia Christiana lex prohibebat; insuper tanta multitudo aduenerat ita ut ciuibus terrori essent; iam nesciebatur quis paganus esset, quis Christianus, quia pagani filias et consanguineas eorum sibi associauerant. (Book VI.391-395)[88]

The tail of the white dragon conversely signifies wisdom, thus possibly evoking the role of good counsellors, such as Merlin, in the prosperity of the realm. The issue of bad versus good counsellors is thus addressed once again in order to emphasise the stark contrast between the perfidious Vortigern and the loyal Merlin. Although the prophecies of Merlin could not be reported at length in the Middle English text, the Auchinleck redactor seems willing to emphasise that they should be considered a reliable source of knowledge of past and future events.

> He told him of þe rede dragoun
> Swiþe michel confvsyoun
> Of him & of his fals stren
> In Jnglond þat schuld ben
> Mani sori chaunce & hard
> Þat sone þer fel þerafterward
> Sum fel now late also
> & sum beþ nouȝt ȝete ago. (ll. 1697-704)

The image used by the Auchinleck redactor in order to describe Uther's arrival is highly evocative. The animal depicted on Uther's 'gomfaynoun' becomes a figure for the future king himself: the lion of England had come to the rescue of his realm and to take revenge on those who disregarded the right of his blood.

> Of þis lond baroun & kniȝt
> Of þe lyoun hadden a siȝt
> King Costaunce þat hadde yben
> & Vter Pendragoun was his stren,
> Anon turned her mode
> To Vter Pendragounes riȝt blod. (ll. 1803-8)

Interestingly, this reference is absent from both Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* and the *Estoire de Merlin*. In both accounts, Uther is merely reported to hold his father's banner. Therefore, the Auchinleck addition of this detail might have been aimed at evoking the three leopards of the Plantagenet coat-of-arms, 'Þai vndede her gomfaynoun | Wiþ a briȝt gliderand lyoun | Þat her faders hadde yben.' (ll. 1767-9). This hypothesis is further corroborated by Edward III's identifying

[88] 'Pagans ought not to communicate or mix with Christians, as it was forbidden by Christian law; moreover, so many of them had arrived that his subjects feared them; no one knew who was pagan and who was Christian, since the pagans had married their daughters and relatives.' Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 130-1.

himself with the leopard of England.[89] In 1329, Roger Mortimer presented the young King Edward III with a cup decorated with the arms of the Arthurian knight Sir Lionel. Edward III henceforth used Sir Lionel's arms extensively. In Old French, 'lionel' means 'little lion',[90] which was not only the lion's cub, but also a type of heraldic lion, namely the *lion passant*, also known as leopard. Therefore, in the first half of the fourteenth century, the image of the lion / leopard appears to have been imbued with an entire repertoire of cultural associations related to King Edward III.

The insistence on 'Vter Pendragounes riȝt blod' (l. 1808) might also have been extremely relevant, as the issue of ruling by blood right was widely debated. The first charge pressed against Roger Mortimer by the Parliament in November 1330 was that of illegally ruling the country on the king's behalf and usurping the English throne.[91]

> Apres queu parlement le dit Roger Mortymer, nient eiant regard au dit assent, accrocha a lui roial poer et le governement du roialme sur lestat le roi.[92]

The parliament might thus have wanted to maintain that Roger Mortimer had no right to enforce his rule on the country, as he was outside the dynastic line.

As foretold by Merlin, Uther and his brother Auriliis eventually reach Winchester at the head of a powerful army. Their ranks are suddenly reinforced by huge numbers of knights and soldiers who decide to shift their allegiance and join the rightful heir to the throne. Angys's help is to no avail. The pagan king flees the battlefield and leaves his former ally, Vortigern, to his inescapable fate. Vortigern's stronghold is burnt to the ground with him. His tragic fate is shortly followed by Angys and Auriliis, who mortally wound each other. In the Middle English account, Uther Pendragon is immediately crowned king by common consent, 'Bi comoun dome, bi comoun rade, | Vter Pendragon coroun nam | & king of Jnglond bicam.' (ll. 2049-51). This sudden acceptance comes as no surprise,

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[89] Ormrod, *Edward III*, p. 99.
[90] *DMF*, http://zeus.atilf.fr/dmf/ [accessed on 21/10/2022]
[91] 'Mortimer, Roger, First Earl of March', *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19354?rskey=1Ex8xF&result=5 [accessed on 15/09/2022]
[92] 'After that parliament, the said Roger Mortimer, completely disregarding the abovementioned consent, usurped the power and the government of the kingdom, which would pertain to the king.' (My translation) *Selected Documents of English Constitutional History 1307-1485*, edited by S.B. Chrimes and A.L. Brown, London: Adam & Charles Black, 1961, p. 43.

since Uther is the sole surviving son of a dead king. There should be no legal impediment to his succession.

The territorial achievements of Uther's reign are described in a passage that has no analogues in either the *Estoire de Merlin* or the *Historia Regum Britanniae* and its translations.

> Bi Merlins red euer he wrouȝt
> Þat into gret power him brouȝt.
> He ouercom king Claudas
> Þat so strong & stern was,
> Þurth his miȝt also he wan
> Þe douhti king Harinan
> & of him he hadde first Gascoyne
> & Normondye & Boloyne
> & al þe marche to Paito
> & Chaumpeine & eke Ango. (ll. 2167-76)

The list of the lands conquered by the king with Merlin's support roughly corresponds to the Norman-Angevin empire. Normandy, Gascony, Poitou and Anjou were in fact part of Henry II's possessions. Nevertheless, the reference to the Counties of Champagne and Boulogne is certainly noteworthy, as they were never proper English domains.[93] As previously explained, the County of Champagne appears to have enjoyed significant connections with both England and the Crusades.[94] As for the County of Boulogne, the connection with the Crusades is even stronger, as Godfrey of Bouillon belonged to the family of the Counts of Boulogne.[95] A connection between the Counties of Boulogne, Champagne and England can also be detected. Matilda, daughter of Godfrey of Bouillon's elder brother, Eustache III, became queen consort of England by marriage to King Stephen, whose father was also Count of Champagne.[96] The Queen of England was thus Countess of Boulogne in her own right.[97] Although it is impossible to prove deliberately specific allusions to the Counties of Boulogne

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[93] Barber, *Edward III and the Triumph of England*, pp. 33-7.
[94] See Chapter 2.4.
[95] John Simon, *Godfrey of Bouillon: Duke of Lower Lotharingia, Ruler of Latin Jerusalem, c.1060-1100*, London: Routledge, 2018, e Book Chapter 1.5, 'Godfrey's parents: Count Eustace II and Ida of Boulogne'.
[96] It might be worth emphasising that the first wife of Godfrey of Bouillon's father, Eustace II, was sister to Edward the Confessor. In 1051 Eustace II visited the English court possibly in order to promote his family's claim to the throne. Nevertheless, after Edward the Confessor's death, he appears to have shifted his allegiance as he participated in William the Conqueror's campaign in England (though his name is not reported in *The Battle Abbey Roll*). Simon, *Godfrey of Bouillon,* e Book Chapter 1.5. For King Stephen's parentage see Chapter 2.3.
[97] *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne*, p. 248.

and Champagne, at least in historical terms, their mention might reveal further intertextual references amongst the Auchinleck poems.

Nevertheless, Uther's imperial policy appears highly problematic in terms of consistency, as it proves in stark contrast with what is reported of his realm in the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*. In the *Chronicle*, Uther, who is not described as Arthur's father, is not interested in conquering new lands, but merely insists on the restitution of Gascony and Normandy on the grounds of his descent from King Hengist.

> Utred regned after þan
> Anon after Cassibalan.
> He was adrad swiþe strong
> Of wer in his owhen lond,
> He lete castels sone arere
> To duelle in ȝif it nede were.
> He no wold non londes craue
> Bot þat he auȝt wiþ riȝt to haue,
> & to hauen in weld
> Þat his auncestres held:
> Gascoyne & Normondye,
> As Hingist it wan wiþ meistri. (*Chronicle*, ll. 946-1002)

Yet, the characteristics ascribed to King Uther in the *Chronicle* appear consonant with those reported in *Of Arthour and of Merlin.* King Uther is the very embodiment of the ideal king: strong and fearsome, courtly and brave.

> Of kniȝtes þat men wist best
> In þis warld þurthout
> Þat table schuld sitte about,
> At þat table non sitt miȝt
> Bot he were noble & douhti kniȝt,
> Strong & hende, hardi & wise,
> Certes & trewe wiþouten feyntise.
> Her non oþer schuld faile
> No neuer fle out of bataile
> Whiles he on fot stond miȝt
> Bot ȝif hem departed þe niȝt,
> At bataile & at bord also
> Bi hemselue þai schuld go -
> So monkes don in her celle
> Bi hemselue þai eten ich telle. (ll. 2198-212)

No moral judgement appears to have been passed on his behaviour towards Ygraine, as though Arthur's unlawful conception could be considered part of the fulfilment of Merlin's prophecy of the country's future greatness, a necessary evil to achieve a greater good. Nevertheless, Merlin and Uther's plans are not deemed acceptable by everyone. Upon the king's death, his son is met by an

utterly unwelcoming reception. The late king is believed to have left no legitimate sons. His realm is again leaderless and lost. Bishop Brice urges everyone to pray for a sign that could solve the dynastic crisis. Once again, Merlin takes on his role of country saviour and kingmaker. He stages a marvel that should convince barons and subjects of Arthur's position as rightful heir. It is Yuletide, the time of the year in which the gates of this world are open to wonders. A noble sword firmly embedded in stone appears in front of the church. Bright letters of gold ornate the sword hilt and blade. One script reads, 'Icham yhot Estalibore | Vnto a king fair tresore' (ll. 2817-8), the other, 'Kerue stiel & iren & al þing' (l. 2820). Although the content of the script is absent from the French source, Excalibur's description is strongly reminiscent of that provided by Chrétien de Troyes in *Perceval.*

> Qu'il avoit çainte Escalibor
> La meilleure espee qui fust,
> Qu'ele trenche fer come fust. (ll. 5868-70)[98]

Interestingly, the author hastens to clarify that the words written on the sword are in English, 'On Jnglis is þis writeing' (l. 2819), possibly in order to emphasise that in spite of its French source and inspiration, the content of this romance is meant to be entirely English. Although this episode is not reported in the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, where Arthur is immediately crowned king upon his father's death, the sword's connection with magic is still apparent. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's account, *Caliburnus* is in fact forged on the isle of Avalon, the magic place of Celtic legends, 'Caliburno gladio optimo et in insula Auallonis fabricato'.[99]

In this passage, the Middle English abridgement of the French account masterfully conveys additional meanings. In the *Estoire de Merlin*, Arthur draws the sword from the stone on Christmas Eve. Nevertheless, before being crowned, he is requested to wait until Easter to give the opportunity to other knights to try their hand at the challenge. In *Of Arthour and of Merlin* as well, the sword appears on Christmas Eve, but it is not until Pentecost that Arthur draws it out. What seems to be a

[98] 'For he had belted on Excalibur, | the best sword ever made, | which cut iron as if it were wood.' Chrétien de Troyes, *The Story of the Grail (Li contes del Graal), or Perceval*, edited by Rupert T. Pickens, translated by William W. Kibler, New York: Garland, 1990, pp. 288-9. Interestingly, a similar description can also be detected in *Guy of Warwick*, 'Sir Amoraunt drouȝ his gode brond | Þat wele carf al þat it fond' (ll. 8088-9).
[99] 'Caliburnus, an excellent blade forged on the isle of Avallon.' Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 198-9.

slight change in the treatment of the source material is in fact highly consequential in terms of symbolism. Since Arthur's exploit takes place at Pentecost, the Christian festivity in which knighting ceremonies usually take place, the narration seems to imply that God anoints the new king by simultaneously knighting him *miles Christi*.[100] Since Easter time is also associated with renewal and rebirth, Arthur's drawing the sword might additionally symbolise the beginning of a new era.

Although Arthur succeeds where everyone else has failed, not all barons are inclined to accept one of such dubious parentage as their new king. Far from showing God's will, the marvel of the sword in the stone is looked at with increasing suspicion. A close analysis of the reasons given by Arthur's detractors might reveal the perception of legitimacy and succession rights in fourteenth-century England. As far as the barons are aware, Arthur is a humble squire in Sir Antor's household and thus unequal to the task. Yet, the Auchinleck redactor hastens to clarify that in spite of his having spent his childhood far from the court, he retains the royal dignity inherited from his father.

> He wex fair & wele yþei
> & was a child of gret noblay;
> He was curteys hende & gent
> & wiȝt & hardi verrament,
> Curteyslich & fair he spac,
> Wiþ him was non iuel lac. (ll. 2719-24)

The reference to his moral cleanness is certainly noteworthy as in the French source Arthur's reputation is far from untarnished. He is in fact reported to have incestuously fathered Mordred. In the Middle English romance there is no room for courtly intrigues: Arthur is his country's leader, the very embodiment of martial prowess and royal majesty. Therefore, as will be discussed later, this episode had been meticulously reworked in order to deprive Mordred of his reputed royal blood.

Merlin somehow anticipates the barons' objections by asking Ulfin, Bretel and Jordains to testify before the astonished crowd that Arthur is in truth Uther's son, 'Merlin seyd "Y wil ȝe wite | Hou þat Arthour was biȝete"' (ll. 3021-2). Notwithstanding all his efforts, he fails to persuade the barons to accept Arthur as their new sovereign. At his coronation in Carduel, Arthur's supporters are but few.

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[100] Especially in romances, the knighting ceremonies usually take place at Pentecost. Robert W. Ackerman, 'The Knighting Ceremonies in the Middle English Romances', *Speculum*, 19 (1944), p. 297.

The first problem lies in Uther's having left no written will. In the French source, Uther is at least reported to have left an official letter stating the circumstances of Arthur's birth as well as the terms of the agreement with Sir Antor, 'Et ulfins saut auant & dist: "vees ent ci les letres pendans que vterpandragon fist faire a merlin de la couenence"'.[101] By contrast, *Of Arthour and of Merlin* reports no written letter, but rather the oral account of Uther's most loyal friends.

> Wharof Vlfin wittnes bar
> & seyd certes þat he was þar
> & Antor bar witnesse þerto
> & seyd þe king him seyd so. (ll. 3025-8)

To complicate the matter further, Arthur had never lived with his parents, nor had ever been publicly recognised as Uther's son.[102] Although in the Middle English version witnesses are summoned to confirm the circumstances of Arthur's birth, Uther is given no final word, as no *post mortem* letter appears. In spite of the absence of a written will, Bishop Brice clearly provides the interpretation that should be given to the sword in the stone: it is a manifestation of God's will. Whoever is able to draw it will be proclaimed king by God's consent.

> Þe bischop seyd to hem anon
> 'Þis swerd who drawe of þe ston
> He schal be our king ymade
> Bi Godes wille & our rade.' (ll. 2821-4)

This is not the sole problem the rebellious kings see in Arthur's claim to the throne: the gifts offered during the coronation banquet are risible. As stressed by Karen Vaneman, the nobles came to the court with certain assumptions as to the benefits they were entitled to receive. Arthur's rather insignificant gifts unsurprisingly do not live up to their expectations.[103]

> Þo þai hadde y-eten alle,
> Heiȝe & lowe in þe halle,
> To ȝeuen ȝiftes sir Arthour aros
> To heiȝe men of grete los
> & to haue of hem vmage
> So it was riȝt & her vssage.
> […]
> Vp þai sterten wiþ gret bost,
> Euerich king wiþ al his ost,

[101] *Lestoire de Merlin*, pp. 90-1. 'And Ulfin sprang forward and said, "Look, here is the sealed letter that Uther Pendragon had Merlin draw up about the agreement."' *The Story of Merlin*, p. 217.
[102] Karen Haslanger Vaneman, 'OF ARTHOUR AND OF MERLIN: Arthour's Story as Arena for the Conflict of Custom and Common Law', *Quondam et Futurus*, 2 (1988), p. 10.
[103] Vaneman, 'Arthour's Story as Arena for the Conflict of Custom and Common Law', p. 11.

& seyd an herlot for noþing
No schuld neuer ben her king
& þouȝt wiþ gret deshonour
For to misdo sir Arthour,
Ac Arthour men bitven þrest. (ll. 3127-32; 3137-43)

The barons define Arthur a 'herlot', a derogatory term that could mean 'vagabond' or 'beggar', thus clearly referring to the lack of status and consequently of wealth that characterises the new king.[104] This certainly contrasts with Merlin's views. In Merlin's eyes, royal blood is the sole discriminating factor in determining the heir to the throne. Neither the lack of wealth, nor the circumstances of Arthur's conception can outweigh his right of blood. Essentially, Merlin restores the succession based on bloodline, so alarmingly interrupted by Vortigern's usurpation. Furthermore, according to the *MED*, 'herlot' also means 'servant', 'buffoon', 'jester', 'story-teller', thus essentially making Arthur an undeserving figure even in terms of status. The word 'herlot' thus comes to condense all socio-economic objections to Arthur's claim. Apart from his lack of status, Arthur's position as new king is also undermined by his having been extramaritally conceived through magic.

Þe barouns seyd to Merlin
'He was founde þurth wiching þin,
Traitour' þai seyd 'verrament
For al þine enchauntement
No schal neuer no hores stren
Our king no heued ben
Ac he schal sterue riȝt anon' (ll. 3153-9)

In Henry de Bracton's twelfth-century *Tractatus de Legibus et Consuetudinibus Regni Angliae*, an entire chapter is devoted to the criteria regulating legitimate succession. In particular, the author focuses on the category of *spurii*: those who 'nihilum apti sunt'.[105] Those *spurii* cannot succeed, as the custom of the kingdom is against it.

> Ad ea vero quae pertinent ad regnum non sunt legitimi, nec heredes iudicantur quod parentibus succedere possint, propter consuetudinem regni quod se habet in contrarium. Spurii vero qui ex damnato coitu procreantur a talibus inter quos matrimonium esse non posset omni prorsus beneficio excluduntur.[106]

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[104] Vaneman, 'Arthour's Story as Arena for the Conflict of Custom and Common Law', p. 11; *MED*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary [accessed on 20/09/2022]

[105] 'Suited for nothing.' Henry de Bracton, *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae,* vol 2, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1915, p. 187. Vaneman, 'Arthour's Story as Arena for the Conflict of Custom and Common Law', p. 12.

[106] Bracton, p. 186. 'As for things pertaining to the kingdom, they are not legitimate, nor can be considered heirs allowed to succeed their parents, due to the custom of the kingdom, which is against it. As for the bastards who are conceived in a condemned union, such as that between persons whose marriage is impossible, they are excluded from all privilege.' (My translation)

An additional point is made by Bracton: those conceived in adultery or with prodigies are not entitled to inherit the crown.

> Item qui ex damnato coitu nascuntur inter liberos non computantur, sicut ex adulterio et huiusmodi. Item qui contra formam humani generis converso more procreantur, veluti si mulier monstruosum aut prodigiosum sit enixa.[107]

Arthur does not belong to the category of 'liberi' and thus is automatically excluded from the succession line.[108] Therefore, as emphasised by Vaneman, despite having been fathered by a king, he could not be considered a legitimate heir, first because he was conceived out of marriage and second because magic played a significant role in it. In the French source, similar reasons are given by the barons who refuse to accept Arthur as their king.

> & li baron distrent que ce nestoit se couureture non & dient que se dieu plaist quil ne feront ia signor domme qui ne soit loiaument engendres, ne ia a bastart, se dieu plaist ne lairont terre tenir ne si haut roialme comme celui de logres est.[109]

The adverb 'loiaument' seems to summarise both legal and moral objections: Arthur's conception is simultaneously unlawful and dishonourable. Yet, this adverb does not appear to have meant 'against the law of nature', thus possibly excluding magic from the range of potential reasons against Arthur's succession.[110]

One of the most meaningful adjustments made by the Auchinleck redactor as compared to his French source probably concerns Mordred's conception. In the French *Estoire de Merlin*, Arthur, still unaware of his parentage, falls in love with Lot's wife and takes advantage of her husband's absence in order to trick her into lying with him. Deeply ashamed of his conduct, he confesses his sin to her as soon as dawn breaks. The French text hastens to clarify that although Arthur's actions might seem controversial at first sight, their outcome somehow still justifies them. Later in the narrative, Gawain's

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[107] Bracton, p. 31. 'Likewise, those who are born from a condemned union, such as from adultery and the like, are not to be considered as *liberi*. Likewise, for those who are conceived in ways contrary to the mores of humankind, just as if a woman delivers a monstrous or prodigious creature.' (My translation) Vaneman, 'Arthour's Story as Arena for the Conflict of Custom and Common Law', p. 12.

[108] Vaneman, 'Arthour's Story as Arena for the Conflict of Custom and Common Law', p. 12.

[109] *Lestoire de Merlin*, p. 91. 'But the barons said that it was nothing but a cover. They also said that, God willing, they would never have as their overlord a man who was not lawfully conceived; never would there be a bastard whom, God willing, they would allow to hold a land or so high a kingdom as the kingdom of Logres.' *The Story of Merlin*, p. 217.

[110] 'Légitimement, selon la justice', [legitimately, according to justice] (my translation); En agissant selon certaines obligations morales, en faisant preuve d'honnêteté, du sens de l'honneur', [acting in conformity with certain moral obligations, proving their sense of honour and loyalty] (my translation) *DMF*, http://zeus.atilf.fr/dmf/. [accessed on 15/09/2022]

mother in fact intervenes to end the quarrel between her husband and the King possibly prompted not only by her will to support her half-brother's cause, but also by some sort of tenderness towards her baby's father.

> Et dautre part en issi mordret qui fu li maines que li rois artus engendra, si vous dirai comment. Car ausi vaudra miex lestoire se iou vous fais entendant en quel maniere il fu engendres de lui, car maintes gens len priseroient mains qui la uerite nen sauroient.[111]

Admittedly, the French text somehow needed a far from perfect portrait of Arthur. After all, Lancelot is the greatest knight of all, the one raised in grace, courtesy and prowess by the Lady of the Lake. In order to justify his adulterous liaison with Queen Guinevere, Arthur had to be portrayed as an underserving husband.[112] One might argue that since Lancelot plays no pivotal role in the Auchinleck version, there was no need to report Arthur's imperfections and blameworthy conduct. Nevertheless, his pre-marital affair was probably too popular to be entirely dismissed. Therefore, the Auchinleck redactor appears to have reworked it to offer as spotless a portrait of the king as possible. In the Middle English account, Arthur does not fall in love with his half-sister, but rather with Earl Siweinis's daughter, Liȝanor. Once again, Merlin uses his magic to give the king the opportunity to lie with his beloved lady. No information is provided about the offspring begotten that night except that he is to become a renowned knight of the Round Table. The episode is not further expanded.

> A damisel of gret valour
> Was þo comen to king Arthour
> To knowe him lord & don omage
> Þat sche no hadde afterward damage,
> & alle hir kniȝtes deden also
> Þat wiþ hir were comen þo;
> Liȝanor þat may was hot,
> Erl Siweinis douhter, God it wot.
> Þo Arthour hir hadde yseiȝe
> Bi hir he wald haue yleiȝe,
> So he dede þurth Merlin,
> A child he biȝat hir in
> Þat wex seþþen of gret mounde
> & kniȝt of þe table rounde. (ll. 4179-92)

[111] *Lestoire de Merlin*, p. 128. 'And I will tell you how, for the history will be more worthwhile if I make you understand how Mordred was sired by him, for many people would find King Arthur less worthy because of it if they did not know the truth.' *The Story of Merlin*, p. 237.

[112] Flora Alexander, 'Late Medieval Scottish Attitudes to the Figure of King Arthur', *Anglia*, 93 (1975), pp. 24-5.

Arthur is neither married nor even betrothed to Guinevere at this point of the story; his liaison is thus not adulterous, let alone incestuous. In this version, Mordred, far from being incestuously conceived by King Arthur, is one of Lot's legitimate sons and thus Gawain's proper brother. Significantly, in order to avoid any possible confusion with the traditional account of Mordred's begetting, the Middle English text gives Lot's wife a name, Belisent, clearly distinct from Lady Liȝanor.

Nevertheless, this might not be the sole reason behind this readaptation. At the time the Auchinleck Manuscript was created, the speculations around Mordred's parentage and right to the throne were in fact still perceived as a burning topic. In the letter produced by Baldred Bisset in response to Edward I's claim to the suzerainty over Scotland, the Scottish lawyer lists the reasons why Edward I could not use Arthur's overlordship over England, Scotland and Wales as supporting evidence for his own claim.

> Quod dicit de Arthuro non procedit. Arthurus de adulterio fuit genitus, nec cuiquam successit ; sed quicquid optinuit in variis locis per potenciam et violenciam acquisivit. Per quam nedum Scociam, sed eciam Angliam, Walliam, Hiberniam, Galliam, Norwegiam et Daciam occupavit. Quo per Modredum filium Loth regis Scocie et heredem Britannie interfecto, Scocia sicut alia regna sibi subjugata ad statum pristinum redierunt, et ad propriam libertatem.[113]

Since Arthur was conceived in adultery, he could have succeeded no one. Whatever he conquered, he did it as a usurper. The rightful heir would in fact have been Mordred, the son of the Scottish king. Since Arthur left no offspring, when Mordred killed him, the suzerainty over Scotland should have passed to him. Nevertheless, since he died in turn, the suzerainty should have returned to the King of Scotland.[114] Arthur's claim to the throne essentially had no legal bases, so Edward I's should not. Interestingly enough, Arthur's portrait in the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* appears

[113] 'What he says about Arthur is not valid. Arthur was born in adultery and did not [lawfully] succeed anyone; but whatever he won in various places, he acquired by force and violence. By these means he occupied not just Scotland, but also England, Wales, Ireland, Gaul, Norway and Denmark. When he was killed by Mordred son of Loth king of Scotland, the heir to Britain, Scotland (just like the other kingdoms subjected to him) returned to its former state and to liberty of its own.' Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, pp. 184-5. Alexander, 'Late Medieval Scottish Attitudes to the Figure of King Arthur', p. 19.

[114] The Auchinleck *Of Arthour and of Merlin* substantially differs from the account provided by Baldred Bisset. In the Middle English text, Mordred's father, King Loth, is not the King of Scotland, but rather the King of Leoneis and Dorkaine. The King of Scotland is conversely King Aguisaunt, who is probably unexpectedly depicted in favourable terms: he courageously fights alongside the other rebellious kings in order to defeat the Saracens invaders. Therefore, in Arthur's times as much as in Charlemagne's, the Christian kings could fight united against a common enemy.

to match that provided by Baldred Bisset. The legendary king is in fact described as a Welsh conqueror summoned by the British barons in order to end King Fortiger's tyrannical rule.

> Þerls & barouns to Wales went
> & to king Arthour þai sent
> & seyd al þat he schold
> Breteyne win ȝif he wold.
> Þo agan grete wer & strong
> In euerich a side in þis lond
> Þurth a strong conquerour
> Þat was ycleped king Arthour.
> Of lond he drof Fortigerne
> & al his folk swiþe ȝernne.
> Arthour dede sle al his men
> & þis lond he tok to him. (ll. 1043-54)

Arthur did not inherit the crown by birth right, but he was rather given it for his inherent qualities as military leader.

As mentioned before, the Scottish lawyer also clarifies that King Edward I could not claim Arthur amongst his ancestors as the Celts were defeated by the Saxons and the Saxons by the Normans in turn.[115] Nevertheless, the extensive use of the determiner 'our' reveals that the Auchinleck redactor understands the sixth-century Britons as the true ancestors of the contemporary English. The standardised frequency of 'our' in *Of Arthour and of Merlin* is twenty-six times higher than that observed in the other romances from the Auchinleck Manuscript.[116] This determiner mainly co-occurs with the words: 'men' / 'man', 'folk', 'king', 'cristen' ('man' / 'men'; 'kinges') / 'cristiens', 'driȝt', 'lord', 'fon' / 'fomen', 'kniȝtes', 'lond', 'barouns', thus reinforcing the association between those

[115] For further details about Baldred Bisset's reply to Edward I's letter see Chapter 2.

[116] The standardised frequency of 'our' in the other romances has been calculated by designing a sub-corpus containing the texts that generally considered as romances and lais: *The King of Tars, Amis and Amiloun, Sir Degare, The Seven Sages of Rome, Floris and Blancheflour, Guy of Warwick, Reinbroun, Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Of Arthour and of Merlin, Roland and Vernagu, Otuel a Kniȝt, Kyng Alisaunder, Sir Tristrem, Sir Orfeo, Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild, King Richard* [$\text{Standardised frequency} = \frac{\text{frequency of 'our'}}{\text{Total number of tokens}} * 10{,}000$; $\text{romance sub} - \text{corpus} = \frac{319}{246{,}538} * 10{,}000 = 13$; $Of\ Arthour\ and\ of\ Merlin = \frac{167}{4{,}947} * 10{,}000 = 338$] A sub-corpus containing the sole romances belonging to the Matter of England does not appear to change this proportion significantly. [Matter of England $\text{sub} - \text{corpus} = \frac{278}{161{,}918} * 10{,}000 = 17$]; the sub-corpus being made by *Guy of Warwick, Reinbroun, Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Of Arthour and of Merlin, Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild, King Richard.* However, it might be worth considering that in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, about 35% of the instances of 'our' occurs in direct speech.

Britons and contemporary English.[117] In order to remove any doubt, he further clarifies that at that time England was called Great Britain and that those Britons are now English.[118]

> Ac Jnglond was yhoten þo
> Michel Breteyne wiþouten no.
> Þe Bretouns þat beþ Jnglisse nov
> Herd telle when he com & hou
> Þat Angys bi water brouȝt (ll. 117-21)

In his roughly contemporary *Chronicle,* Robert of Gloucester similarly establishes an association between ancient Britain and contemporary England, 'Vor þat was bruteyne ycluped er me clupeþ nou engelond' (l. 5125).[119] Significantly, the wording seems strongly reminiscent of William of Malmesbury's *El Libro De Laudibus et Miraculis Sanctae Mariae* in which an instance of the cluster Great Britain can already be detected, 'Britannia Maior, quae nunc Anglia dicitur'.[120] The cluster 'Michel Breteyne' is also used twice in the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*. The first instance refers to the realm of King Leir 'In Michel Breteyne y was king' (l. 914), whereas the second to that of Seberd (particularly to the episode of Dame Inge) 'In Michel Breteyne þai gun riue | & out of schip þai went bliue' (ll. 1301-2). In this redactor's eyes, since Arthur is undoubtedly Edward I's ancestor, his claim to suzerainty over Scotland is just and lawful. No final word can be said about the contrasting perceptions on Arthur's claim to the throne; however, the inconsistencies presented in the Auchinleck Manuscript might all too well testify to the difficulties in dealing with such an unstable and politically charged matter.

The emphasis on legal controversies might also offer further insight into the intended audience of the Auchinleck collection. If on the one hand the courtly dimension as well as the romance imagery

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[117] These tables show the frequency of the ten highest ranking 2-word clusters beginning with 'our'.

Rank	Freq.	Cluster
1	17	our men / man
2	15	our folk
3	9	our king
4	9	our cristen /cristiens
5	5	our driȝt

Rank	Freq.	Cluster
6	5	our lord
7	5	our fon / fomen
8	4	our kniȝtes
9	3	our lond
10	2	our barouns

[118] Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity*, p. 176.
[119] Robert of Gloucester, p. 372.
[120] 'Great Britain, which now is called England' (my translation) quoted in William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum* vol 2 general introduction and commentary by R. M. Thomson in collaboration with M. Winterbotton, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999, p. 48.

could suit a wider audience, on the other the insistence on succession rights might have probably appealed more to an aristocratic audience, who could share the same concerns as the rebellious barons.

> For a family of aristocracy in a custom outside that prioritised by the Court, it would make good sense to have a text like *Of Arthour and of Merlin* so that the family members could be entertained with the proper views of significant relationships and primary loyalties and the behaviours appropriate and even valuable to the perpetuation of those views.[121]

As stressed in Chapter 2, Glastonbury Abbey plays a pivotal role in the Auchinleck Chronicle as the burial place of six of England's most influential pre-conquest kings: Hengist, Uther, Hine, Arthur, (Saint) Edmund and (Saint) Edgar. The Abbey also appears to have been extensively involved not only in the support of the king's policies, but also in the dissemination of Arthur's legend and its use for political propaganda. Arthur was first associated with the Abbey in the work of the twelfth-century Welsh poet Caradog of Llancarvan, *Vita Gildae*. Shortly afterwards, Glastonbury started to be identified with the Isle of Glass and later, by extension, with the Isle of the Apples, Avalon.[122] The attempt to establish an association with the Arthurian legend was prompted by political and financial reasons internal to the Abbey itself. In 1184, the Abbey was extensively damaged by a huge fire and needed substantial rebuilding. The exploitation of the Arthurian myth could certainly provide the means to fund the renovation of the Abbey. The political conjunction was also favourable to the promotion of an alternative site to Canterbury in terms of royal patronage. After the assassination of Thomas Becket, Henry II might have felt it necessary to divert the attention from Canterbury to another equally prestigious site of worship. Glastonbury might have been perceived as the best option. Yet, Arthur's earthly remains were to be discovered only some ten years after Becket's death, during the realm of Henry II's son, Richard I. The legendary king's exhumation undoubtedly moved the Abbey at the centre of the English Arthurian propaganda.[123] From then on, the Abbey could hardly be dissociated from the mythical king. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, possibly in order

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[121] Vaneman, 'Arthour's Story as Arena for the Conflict of Custom and Common Law', p. 17.
[122] James P. Carley, 'Arthur in English History', in *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, edited by W.R.J. Barron, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001, p. 48.
[123] Carley, 'Arthur in English History', p. 48.

to cement the relationship between Glastonbury and the Arthurian legend, the abbey scriptorium composed a text derived from the Old French *Perlesvaus*, the *Quedam Narracio de Nobili Rege Arthuro,* reporting Arthur's particular devotion for the Church of Our Lady at Glastonbury. This text was probably meant to offer a plausible explanation for Arthur's alleged patronage of Glastonbury itself.[124] Furthermore, Glastonbury was also connected with the legend of the Grail, as Joseph of Arimathea was believed to have been Arthur's ancestor. Jesus' secret disciple was said to have travelled to England with a bunch of apostles and founded the church of England in 63 AD,[125] thus essentially predating the preaching of Augustine of Canterbury of more than five centuries. In terms of prestige, this choice was extremely consequential. Just as Brutus provided the kings of England with an illustrious ancestry dating back to the Trojan War, so Joseph of Arimathea could provide the Church of England with a prestigious apostolic founder. The English Church could thus not only surpass in dignity its French counterpart, but it could also compete with the Church of Rome in terms of antiquity.[126] In order to reinforce the bonds between Glastonbury and Joseph of Arimathea, in his *Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey,* John of Glastonbury reports a prophecy of Melkin the Bard according to which the saint was buried alongside two cruets containing the blood and the sweat of Christ in a *vetusta ecclesia* – the Church of Our Lady at Glastonbury.[127]

In spite of the evident connections between this manuscript and Glastonbury, the Auchinleck redactor does not seem to be willing to expand the references to Joseph of Arimathea and the Holy Grail any further. As for the former, the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle* does not seem to align with the speculations around the first Christian preaching in England, as the date for the Christianisation of England is customarily reported as 597 AD, 'Of Seynt Austin Cristendom he nam | After þe berþe of Ihesu here | .V. hundred & four score & lx ȝer.' (ll. 1120-2). As for the latter, the

[124] Carley, 'Arthur in English History', p. 53.
[125] Valerie M. Lagorio, 'The Evolving Legend of St. Joseph of Glastonbury', *Speculum*, 46 (1971), p. 216.
[126] Mary Flowers Braswell, 'The Search of the Holy Grail: Arthurian Lacunae in the England of Edward III', *Studies in Philology*, 108 (2011), p. 480.
[127] Although some excavations appear to have been carried out in 1354, the body of Joseph of Arimathea has never been found. Lagorio, 'The Evolving Legend of St. Joseph of Glastonbury', pp. 218-9.

precious relic is mentioned only three times in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, ‘þe meruaile | Of þe greal’ (ll. 2222; 4293-4); ‘Þe meruails of þe sengreal’ (l. 2750) with reference to the Round Table, to King Pellinore and to the death of Uther respectively. The reference to the Round Table is certainly significant as it might reveal a wider knowledge of the French Vulgate Cycle. In the *Estoire del Saint Graal*, the Holy Grail miraculously appears to the knights gathered around the Round Table at Pentecost and immediately triggers the famous quest. In the Middle English version, the Holy Grail is mentioned in the context of the creation of the Round Table, whereas the subsequent temporal reference to Pentecost functions as the opening of a new section. Nevertheless, the juxtaposition of Holy Grail and Pentecost in two subsequent lines might reveal this redactor’s desire to create a complex network of allusions to the Vulgate Lancelot-Grail Cycle as a whole.

> Til he wer born þat schuld do al
> Fulfille þe meruails of þe greal.
> It was opon þe Pentecost
> In time þat þe Holy Gost (ll. 2221-4)

Given the prominence relics enjoy in this manuscript, the scarcity of references to the Holy Grail is rather unexpected, especially if one considers that unlike the True Cross or the Crown of Thorns this would have been an entirely English relic. According to the legend, Joseph of Arimathea had in fact travelled to England carrying the Holy Grail with him.[128] Once again, the historical context might offer further insight into this redactor’s omission. In fourteenth-century England, a similar relic was inflaming the religious debate: the Blood of Hales. From a political viewpoint it would have been a portentous weapon in the hands of political propaganda, as it could rival the precious relics stored in the Sainte Chapelle. Yet, it was not straightforwardly accepted as the blood of Christ.[129] According to Thomas Aquinas, since Christ’s blood belonged to his human nature, it could not have been preserved, as it would have risen again in his body at the moment of his resurrection.[130] Although the

[128] Braswell, ‘The Search of the Holy Grail’, p. 470.
[129] Braswell, ‘The Search of the Holy Grail’, p. 477.
[130] Braswell, p. 478; Clair Baddeley, ‘The Holy Blood of Hayles’, *Transactions of the Bristol & Archaeological Society*, 23 (1900), p. 278; ‘Quod totus sanguinis qui de corpore Christi fluxit, cum ad veritatem humanæ naturæ pertineat, in corpore Christi resurrexit; et eadem ratio est de omnibus particulis ad veritatem et integritatem humanæ naturæ pertinentibus. Sanguinis autem ille qui in quibusdam Ecclesiis pro reliquiis conservatur, non fluxit de latere Christi, sed miraculose dicitur effluxisse de quadam imagine Christi percussa.’ (III.54) S. Thomæ Aquinatis, *Summa Theologica*, vol

Blood of Hales had never been publicly associated with the Grail, it was somehow implicitly identified with it.[131] The controversies around its nature might have possibly prevented its use for political propaganda.[132]

Nevertheless, the Holy Grail appears to have been intimately connected with the Crusades, as the story of its apparition and subsequent quest entered the Arthurian legend at the same time as the fall of Jerusalem, in 1187. According to Stephen Knight, the timing is not accidental, but rather strongly associated with the impossibility of regaining the Holy Land. [133]

> When the west could no longer even dream of regaining the holy places, not only is a new knight shaped in the image of Christ himself, not only human knights manage to be present before the Real Presence, but by the mystical displacement of this version of the story, the Grail returns with these most sacred of Western knights to the Holy Land itself and is at last assumed into heaven, a place where no one can dispute ownership. The full circle of ideological compensation is made; not only was the military rejection of the crusaders contained in a fiction, but their original journey East has been made ideologically unnecessary.[134]

Although in *Of Arthour and of Merlin,* the reference to the Holy Grail is admittedly scarce, the ubiquitous presence of Saracen invading armies certainly evokes crusading imagery. In the Middle English text, the pagan Saxons are replaced with Saracens, thus transforming the legendary king into a crusade leader. The reshaping of the Arthurian wars in the light of crusading imagery is apparent in the words of the King of the Hundred Knights: he urges his fellow knights to stand united in the face of a common pagan enemy.

> 'Ich rede we sende our sond
> To alle our peres of þis lond
> Þat we ous geder togider alle
> & on þe paiens at ones falle
> & fonden bi fine miȝt
> To slen hem alle doun riȝt.' (ll. 6733-8)

6, edited by Nicolai Sylvii Billuart, Paris: Bloud et Barral, 1882, p. 458. 'Since all the blood that flowed from Christ's body pertained to the truth of human nature, it rose in Christ's body; and the same reason applies to all things pertaining to the truth and integrity of human nature. The blood preserved in some churches as a relic did not flow from the side of Christ, but is said to have miraculously flowed from some beaten image of Christ.' (My translation)

[131] Braswell, 'The Search of the Holy Grail', p. 476.

[132] He conversely sent his son in 1353. Braswell, 'The Search of the Holy Grail', p. 481.

[133] Stephen Knight, 'From Jerusalem to Camelot: King Arthur and the Crusades', in *Medieval Codicology, Iconography, Literature and Translation: Studies for Keith Val Sinclair*, edited by Peter Rolfe Monks and D. D. R. Owen, Leiden: Brill, 1994, p. 223.

[134] Knight, 'From Jerusalem to Camelot', p. 231.

If on the one hand this transformation might have been driven by the desire to elevate the legendary king to the rank of the champions of Christianity and offer an English counterpart to Charlemagne, on the other it might also have been prompted by constraints of consistency. In the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, Saxon kings and saints are in fact celebrated as illustrious ancestors of the contemporary English; therefore, in order to maintain a certain degree of unity in the collection, the Auchinleck redactor might have felt it necessary to invent new adversaries. Furthermore, since after Edward I's conquest of Wales, the Welsh came to identify the sixth-century Saxon invaders with the contemporary English,[135] the Auchinleck redactor might have wanted to depict an enemy which was beyond any dangerous nationalistic interpretation. The Saracens were undoubtedly the best candidates for such a replacement.

As argued in the previous chapter, the Auchinleck redactor might have also performed an additional transformation: not only had the Saxons been transformed into Saracens, but the Saracens might have further been transformed into figures for the Scots. Although the description of the waste laid by the Saxons / Saracens is certainly not new to the Auchinleck version, in early fourteenth-century England it might have been interpreted in the light of the Scottish raids suffered by the population of the Border after Bannockburn.

However, the Auchinleck redactor somehow seems to miss yet another opportunity to expand a possible parallel between the sixth-century pagan invaders and contemporary Scots. In the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Geoffrey of Monmouth offers a rather negative portrait of the Picts: not only is a Pict responsible for the treacherous assassination of King Costaunce, but his fellow nationals also send for the Danes and the Norsemen for help.[136] This would have provided the Auchinleck redactor

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[135] 'After the final conquest of Wales by Edward I in the late thirteenth century, the Arthurian legend, or rather the Galfridian history of Britain, took on a special meaning for the Welsh, for it presented the ideal of a united Britain under the rule, in England, of a native British king. This, together with the theme of loss and decline after Arthur's reign, touched a deep chord, and under the influence of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* the Saxons became even more explicitly identified with the contemporary English as the oppressors of the Welsh and stealers of their inheritance, a process facilitated by the obvious derivation of *Saeson*, the Welsh word for the English.' Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, 'The Celtic Tradition', in *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, edited by W.R.J. Barron, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001, p. 8.

[136] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, p. 120.

with a clear association with Scotland, yet in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, the Picts are never mentioned. Apart from the instances retrieved in Laȝamon's Brut, the word 'Picts' is almost absent from the corpus of early Middle English. The other vernacular attestations seem to date back to the end of the fourteenth century; therefore, this omission might have merely been grounded in linguistic reasons.[137]

These speculations would be relevant only in so far as the replacement Saxons / Saracens had been operated by the Auchinleck redactor himself.[138] Therefore, the two instances of the word 'Sessoyne' presented in *Of Arthour and of Merlin* deserve further attention.

> King Angys sone herd it telle,
> He gadred him folk wel felle
> Of Danmark & of Sessoyne
> For to wer oȝaines Moyne,
> He filled ful mani dromouns
> Of kinges erls & barouns (ll. 99-114)
>
> Wiþ whom þai weren & wos men,
> Þai seyd wiþ king Brangore,
> & Wandlesbiri þai lay fore.
> Of Sessoine þis heiȝe king was,
> & hadde made al þis purchas
> Opon our men, ywis,
> For þe sibred of douke Angis (ll. 6928-34)

In the early stages of Costentine's realm, Angys, the pagan King of Denmark, succeeds in gathering troops even from Saxony, 'Sessoyne', apparently the realm of one King Brangore. In Arthur's coronation scene, one King Carodas, knight of the Round Table, is described as the King of Strangore, 'Þer com ȝete king Carodas | Þe king of Strangore he was' (ll. 3089-90). Yet, some six hundred lines later, this kingdom is attributed to that same King Brangore elsewhere described as the King of Saxony, 'King Brangores þat held Strangore' (l. 3729). The French source probably adds further confusion as to the identity of this king. King Brangore (Brangoire) is in fact described as the nephew of Aminaduc, one King of the Saxons, 'Qvant li rois brangoyres & li rois margaris & li rois hargodabrans qui neueu estoient aminaduc le roy des sesnes qui fu oncles augis le sesne que li peres

[137] At the end of the fourteenth century, it is mentioned in John Trevisa's translation of Higden's *Polichronicon*. *MED*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED33296/track?counter=1&search_id=21017194 [accessed on 15/09/2022]

[138] Nevertheless, one might argue that even if the source text already presented Saracen opponents, this collection would still show a careful selection of the items.

au roy artus ochist',[139] and King of the Saxons himself, 'roi brangoire de sessoigne'.[140] Nevertheless, this attempt to give contrasting information about King Brangore's identity might not entirely be an instance of carelessness on the redactor's part. In the French text, the Saxons are undoubtedly described as pagans; therefore, the marriage of King Brangore with Sagremor's mother and widow of the King of Constantinople would have somehow been considered yet another inter-religious marriage of the same sort as that between Vortigern and Angys's daughter.

> & cil rois brangoires ot a feme j moult gentil feme qui estoit fille audeans lempereor de constantinoble. & cele dame auoit eu seignor deuant qui fu rois de blasque & de hongherie, mais il trespassa al chief de .v. ans quil ot espousee la dame si li remeist j enfant, la plus bele creature qui fust en fourme domme. Icil valles estoit moult biaus & preus & sages si estoit bien del eage quil peust estre cheualiers.[141]

The Auchinleck redactor's confusion does not seem ascribable to a lack of material in the available sources, as the passage describing Sagremor's parentage is translated in full.

> Þis Brangores of valour
> Ludranes douster þemperour
> Bi þat time hadde yspoused,
> A leuedi gent & preciouse,
> Ac þe king of Hungri & of Blaske
> Hir hadde first to wiue ytake;
> Bi hir form husbounde
> Sche hadde a child of gret mounde
> Þat was yhoten Sagremor,
> In ward wiþ þemperour
> Þat was air of þempire
> & of Blaske & of Hungrie -
> ȝe schul here afterward hou Segremor
> Com to kniȝt of king Arthour
> Whereþurth þemperour sikerliche
> Him hadde ygraiþed richeliche
> & hadde him sent fro Costentinenoble
> To Jnglondward wiþ mani noble. (ll. 4471-88)

Although Sagremor was not Brangore's son, the connection with the pagan Saxons outlined in the French source might have been perceived unsuitable for the message the Auchinleck redactor wanted to convey. After all, inter-religious marriages have proved to bring disgrace on the whole country; therefore, since in this text Sagremor is about to become one of the greatest knights of the Arthurian

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[139] *Lestoire de Merlin*, p. 113. 'When King Brandegorre, King Margarit, and King Hargadabran, who were the nephews of Aminaduc, king of the Saxons, uncle of Hengist, whom Arthur's father killed.' *The Story of Merlin*, p. 229.
[140] *Lestoire de Merlin*, p. 166. 'King Brandegorre of Saxony.' *The Story of Merlin*, p. 258.
[141] *Lestoire de Merlin*, pp. 131-2. 'This king Brandegorre had a wife, a very noble woman, who was the daughter of Hadrian, emperor of Constantinople. This lady had formerly had a husband who was king of Vlask and Hungary, but he died only five years after he had wed the lady and left a son, the most handsome, worthy, and intelligent, and he was at the age when he should become knight.' *The Story of Merlin*, pp. 238-9.

court, there is no place for omens of doom. This unease with the figure of Brangore can be detected in another addition of the Auchinleck redactor: the character of the enchantress Carmile.

> Four þousand he fond at hom
> Þat were bliþe of his com
> For vnneþe fram hem fiue mile
> Woned a wiche hete Carmile -
> Hir broþer hiȝt Hardogabran,
> A swiþe riche soudan.
> Of wichecraft & vilaine
> & eke of nigramace
> Of þis warld sche couþe mast
> Wiþouten Arthours soster abast –
> Morgein forsoþe was hir name
> & woned wiþouten Niniame
> Þat wiþ hir queint gin
> Bigiled þe gode clerk Merlin. (ll. 4435-48)

In the *Estoire de Merlin*, Hardagraban is described as one of King Aminaduc's nephews, thus possibly Brangore's brother, whereas in the Middle English rendition, he is merely a Saracen sultan. In both texts Hardagraban and Carmile are siblings. However, it is only in another text from the French Vulgate Cycle, *Lancelot of the Lake*, that Carmile is described as an enchantress skilled in the obscure arts. In the *Estoire de Merlin*, Hardagraban's sister is merely described as a beautiful lady, whose name is not even mentioned. In the French text, Carmile succeeds in seducing Arthur. The King is so madly in love with her that he falls in her trap: after having lain with her, he is taken to prison. The country is now leaderless as the king's desire has been allowed to outweigh his duty towards his country. Unsurprisingly, this further episode of adultery on the king's part is omitted from the Middle English text.

> Cheleiement auoit este fremee au tans que vortigers prist la fille hangist le sai[s]ne & diluec a [a]restueil auoit bien xij lieues escotoises si estoit tout destruit quan quentre ij auoit fors j castel ou il auoit vne damoisele qui estoit apelee Camille si sauoit plus dencantemens que damoisele del pais & moult ert bele & estoit del lignage as saisnes.[142]

[142] *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances vol. 3, Le Livre de Lancelot del Lac, part 1*, edited by H. Oskar Sommer, Washington: The Carnegue Institution of Washington, 1910, p. 406 (henceforth *Le Livre de Lancelot del Lac*). 'It [the castle] had been fortified at the time Vortigern married the daughter of Hengist the Saxon. From there to Arestel was fully twelve Scottish leagues, and everything was destroyed between them, except for one castle in which there lived a maiden named Gamille. She knew more about enchantments than any other maiden in the land; she was very beautiful, and of Saxon lineage.' *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate Post-Vulgate Translation, vol. 2, Lancelot part ii*, edited by Norris J. Lacy, translated by Carleton W. Carroll, New York: Garland, 1993, p. 225 (henceforth *Lancelot part ii*).

Shortly afterwards, during the battle in which Queen Guinevere's army led by Lancelot destroys the Saxon opponents, the French author clarifies that Carmile's treason was prompted by her loyalty towards her brother.

> Lancelos va auant qui fait les merueilles si adreche son cheual vers le plus haut home & le plus poisant de toute lost & au plus preu si auoit non hargodabrans si estoit graindres dautres cheualiers demi pie & plaine palme & pairoit autresi par deseure tous les autres li quins de son hiaume com se che fust vne enseigne si recourent tot a lui si estoit a la damoisele de la roche & par li auoit ele fait la traison del roi artu & de ses compaignons car il baoit a prendre toute bertaigne puis quil auoit le cors le roi & monseignor Gauuain.[143]

One last thought should be given to the brief mention of Morgan in the context of the Carmile episode. Although the story of Vivienne and Merlin is not reported in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, the reference to Arthur's sister, 'Morgein', might imply that at this point of the Arthurian tradition Morgan has lost all traces of the healer of the Isle of the Apples and has been transformed into a cruel witch comparable to the pagan necromancer. In a further attempt to simplify his sources, the Auchinleck redactor overcomes the problematic identification of Morgan with the Lady of the Lake, 'Nimiane', by just having her dwelling in the nearby of a town called 'Niniame'.

In another instance reminiscent of the crusading discourse, the Middle English text emphasises the extent to which the power of Christian faith could overwhelm any Saracen sorcery: for as long as Merlin fights on Arthur's side, Carmile's magic is to no avail.

> Ac Carmile par ma fay
> Bi Merlines liif-day
> No miȝt do wiþ hir wicheing
> In Jnglond non anoiing. (ll. 4457-60)

The text covers around half the material present in the French source (31 chapters out of 60); nevertheless, it would probably be too simplistic to conclude that the Auchinleck redactor had left his romance unfulfilled due to a lack of source material. If one considers the English national identity as the leitmotif of the Auchinleck Manuscript, it comes as no surprise that this romance stops at Arthur's

[143] *Le Livre de Lancelot del Lac,* p. 422. 'Lancelot rode forward, accomplishing wonders, and turned his horse toward the noblest man, the most powerful and worthiest in all the army. He was named Hargadraban, and he was taller than other knights by half a foot and a full handbreadth, and the point of his helmet was visible above all others as if it were a banner, and all rallied to him. He was the brother of the maiden of the Rock, and it was for him that she had betrayed King Arthur and his companions for he aspired to take all of Britain, once he had captured the king and Sir Gawain.' *Lancelot part ii,* p. 234.

first victory against King Rion of Ireland and his betrothal to Guinevere. Both this Arthur and Edward III prove in the ascending phase of the Wheel of Fortune, their first victories being mere harbingers of upcoming greatness. In *Of Arthour and of Merlin,* the traits of ideal kingship are further explored in terms of military leadership. The struggle for succession takes on shades of crusading ideal to such an extent that Arthur is simultaneously described as the defender of England and of the Christian faith. The legendary king thus becomes a figure for Charlemagne and possibly also for King Richard. Although *Of Arthour and of Merlin* appears to have combined the tradition of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* with that of the Vulgate Lancelot-Grail Cycle, its major themes are masterly re-adjusted in order to suit the early fourteenth-century English preoccupations around ideal kingship and succession rights. The years of unrest that followed the deposition of Edward II in 1327 certainly raised questions around the limits of royal power and the barons' rights to depose an inept king. The Anglo-Scottish conflicts might also have informed the account of the realm of the legendary king. *Of Arthour and of Merlin* might thus further demonstrate the extent to which the English Arthurian tradition had continuously been enriched with political allusions.

4.2 Disinherited heroes: *Horn Childe & Maiden Rimnild*

The Auchinleck peculiar interpretation of the *Liber Regum Angliae* is followed by a pseudo-historical romance unique to this manuscript: *Horn Childe & Maiden Rimnild*.[144] These two texts dominate the entire Booklet 10. Since the only other item from this booklet, *The Alphabetical Praise of Women,* is evidently a filler, one might argue that this whole section is devoted to England's Anglo-Saxon past. Nevertheless, other versions of the legend of King Horn survive in both Anglo-Norman and Middle English. *King Horn* is considered the oldest extant romance in Middle English and is believed to have been composed in the last quarter of the thirteenth century,[145] whereas the date of composition of the

[144] Matthew L. Holford, 'History and Politics in "Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild"', *The Review of English Studies*, 57 (2006), p. 151.
[145] Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, Eve Salisbury, 'King Horn – Introduction' in *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*, edited by Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, Eve Salisbury TEAMS Middle English Texts https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/salisbury-king-horn-introduction [accessed on 07/01/2023]

Anglo-Norman *Romance de Horn* by Mestre Thomas is set around one century earlier, c. 1170.[146] Although none of the Middle English versions appear to be a direct translation of the Anglo-Norman text, they broadly share the same plot.[147] Horn's story is one of unjust dispossession and ultimate lawful regain of his legitimate inheritance. The murder of Horn's father at the hands of a Saracen invading army transforms his private struggle to reconquer his lands into a national campaign to defend England and the Christian faith against foreign pagan invaders. The crusading undertones pervading *King Horn*'s narrative would have been perfectly consistent with the general motifs of the Auchinleck Manuscript – particularly with those characterising *Of Arthour and of Merlin* – and yet this 1136-line fragment of the Horn legend proves substantially different. Horn's Christian father, Haþeolf, is in fact forced to fight against other pagan invaders: the non-fictional Danes. The Viking invasions did take place from the eighth to the eleventh century, thus essentially aligning the *Horn Childe* account with what is reported in the chronicles.[148] Nevertheless, this change does not appear to provoke any inconsistencies in the Auchinleck Manuscript, but rather to create some sort of sub-corpus of pseudo-historical romances set in pre-conquest England. *Guy of Warwick* as well reports Danish invasions. The single combat between the eponymous hero and Colbrond is meant to determine whether England's future ruler would be Anglo-Saxon or Danish, though the champion chosen by the Viking invaders is admittedly once again a Saracen giant.

Since the King of Northern England, Haþeolf, has but one son, Horn, he decides to raise him with eight companions. The romance begins with the harsh battle between Haþeolf's army and the Danes at Teesside, in the Northeast of England. Haþeolf succeeds in defeating the invaders, though the

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[146] Susanna Fein, 'The Geste of Kyng Horn – Introduction' in *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, vol. 2, edited by Susanna Fein, David Raybin, Jan Ziolkowski, TEAMS Middle English Texts https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/fein-harley2253-volume-2-article-70-introduction [accessed on 07/01/2023]

[147] *The Birth of Romance, an Anthology: Four Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Romances*, translated by Judith Weiss, London: Everyman's library, 1992, pp. 1-120; 'King Horn – Introduction' in *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*, edited by Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, Eve Salisbury TEAMS Middle English Texts https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/salisbury-king-horn-introduction [accessed on 15/01/2023]; 'The Geste of Kyng Horn' in *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, vol. 2, edited by Susanna Fein, David Raybin, Jan Ziolkowski, TEAMS Middle English Texts https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/fein-harley2253-volume-2-article-70-introduction [accessed on 07/01/2023]

[148] Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 239; 389.

fathers of Horn's friends are all slain. The king justly entrusts them with their fathers' inheritance as well as asking them to swear allegiance to his son. Nine months later, another invading army attacks the kingdom from the West. The Vikings of Ireland are defeated, though Haþeolf is slain by one of their leaders, King Malkan. The King of Northumberland takes advantage of the prince's minority to seize his properties and young Horn is forced to flee southward. King Houlac, the King of Southern England welcomes Horn into his court and raises him like a knight suited in arms as much as minstrelsy. The King's daughter, Rimnild, falls in love with Horn. Yet, one of Horn's former companions betrays him and out of jealousy falsely accuses him of lying with Rimnild. Horn is forced to leave again. He flees westward and incidentally rescues the realm of the son of the King of Wales from the pagan invaders. Horn succeeds in avenging his father's death by killing Malkan and restores his reputation at Houlac's court. The process of Horn's rehabilitation has just begun: he marries his beloved Rimnild and immediately sets off for Northumberland in order to claim his father's lands back.

The prologue immediately establishes a historical and emotional connection between Anglo-Saxon and present-day England through the use of the determiners 'our' and 'þis'. These 'stories' of 'our elders' will provide not only entertainment, but also historically reliable knowledge. The educational intent is further emphasised by the verb 'vnderstonde', which sets as this text's goal the achievement of a full comprehension of England's illustrious roots.

Mi leue frende dere,
Herken & ȝe may here
& ȝe wil vnderstonde,
Stories ȝe may lere
Of our elders þat were
Whilom in þis lond. (ll. 1-6)

These lines seem reminiscent of those opening the preceding chronicle in terms of the prominence given to the history of England as a nation. The prologue to the Auchinleck version of the *Liber Regum Angliae* is characterised by some sort of reduplication not only in terms of content, but also of form, as the cluster 'Hou Jnglond first bigan' is repeated twice. The addition of four lines before

the standard opening of the chronicle reinforces the effect of rhetorical amplification.[149] The claim of providing an account of England's history in English is thus almost transformed into a nationalistic motto.

> Here may men rede whoso can
> Hou Jnglond first bigan.
> Men mow it finde jn Englische
> As þe Brout it telleþ, ywis.
> Herkeneþ hiderward lordinges,
> ȝe þat wil here of kinges,
> Ichil ȝou tellen as y can
> Hou Jnglond first bigan. (ll. 1-8)

Both texts also share an interest in the medium whereby the knowledge of England's past will be achieved. In the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* the Auchinleck redactor seems to delineate two complementary forms of delivery: his *historia* can be read by those who are literate or listened to by those who are not. Several customary references to written sources are scattered throughout *Horn Childe* as well, 'in boke as we rede' (ll. 276; 277; 468; 1119); nevertheless, other alternative forms of delivery are also presented. For instance, in the description of Horn's education, the Auchinleck redactor seems to suggest an intimate connection between music and text.

> Harpe & romaunce he radde ariȝt,
> Of al gle he hadde insiȝt
> Þat in lond ware. (ll. 286-8)

According to the *MED*, 'reden' would mean not only to engage in private reading, but also to read aloud – possibly with musical accompaniment – thus essentially outlining different forms of romance delivery.[150] The description of the five-day celebrations for Horn's marriage and his sudden departure in order to regain his father's lands is followed by yet another reflection on the relationship between literary genre and medium.

> In boke as we rede.
> Forþ, as we telle in gest,
> Horn lete sende est & west
> His folk to batayle bede (ll. 1119-22)

[149] No other extant version of the *Liber Regum Angliae* reports these additional lines. *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, p. xlvii.
[150] *MED*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary [accessed on 15/01/2023]

The written word, the 'boke', is contraposed to the oral 'gest' of the epic poetry. Significantly, this transition from one medium to the other takes place when Horn is moved from the courtly to the heroic context. The words 'bokes', 'romaunces' and 'gestes' might well be formulaic and perceived as quasi-synonyms; nevertheless, they appear to be meaningfully used by the *Horn Childe* redactor in order to emphasise crucial moments in the narrative.[151] Another instance of this redactor's attention to the multifaced nature of literary genres and their forms of delivery can be detected shortly before Haþeolf's last battle. At the news of a new Viking invasion, Haþeolf is reported to have composed a *lai.* The king's reaction might somehow be unexpected and even more so if one considers that he plays the harp even to rally his troops.

> He bad þe harpour leuen his lay
> 'For ous bihoueþ anoþer play,
> Buske armour & stede.'
> He sent his sond niȝt & day
> Also fast as he may,
> His folk to batayl bede. (ll. 157-62)

However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, in Wace's *Roman de Brut*, a minstrel, one Taillefer, is reported to have sung the *Song of Roland* in order to raise the army's spirit before the Battle of Hastings. Therefore, Haþeolf is more likely to have created a piece of heroic poetry – a 'geste' – rather than a poem of adventures and courtly love – a 'romaunce'?, a 'lai'? – thus essentially emphasising the limits inherent in any attempt to find a straightforward definition of these categories.

The first 200 lines devoted to the battle between Anglo-Saxons and Danes at the mouth of the river Tees are unique to the Auchinleck Manuscript, as the other versions of the legend of King Horn condense this episode in around 20 lines without providing any specific location. The topographical accuracy of the Auchinleck version is not limited to this first episode, but is rather extended to the entire first part of the romance, thus possibly suggesting an audience familiar with the geography of Northern England. The 'Clifland' (l. 70) battle is in fact followed by specific references to 'Blakeowe More' (l. 110), 'Pikering' (l. 116) and 'Ȝork' (l. 117), whereas the subsequent fight against the Irish kings is reported to have been fought at 'Staynes More' (l. 175). It might be impossible to determine

[151] *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, edited by Maldwyn Mills, Heidelberg: Winter, 1988, p. 74.

which parts of *Horn Childe* are the Auchinleck redactor's additions and which were already present in his source text, as no antecedent has yet been identified; nevertheless, the attention for the geography of England is entirely consistent with the general taste of this collection.

In terms of geographical references, that to 'Seyn Sibiles Kirke' (l. 84), the place in which the bones of the Danes who perished in battle have reputedly been buried, deserves further attention.

> Þe Danis men were al slan,
> It bigan to mirke.
> Whoso goþ or rideþ þerbi
> ȝete may men see þer bones ly
> Bi Seyn Sibiles Kirke. (ll. 80-4)

According to Matthew Holford, the church mentioned would correspond to a chapel devoted to Saint Sulpitius near the mouth of the River Tees, '"Sulpitius" was presumably the correct dedication: the other forms are easily explained as corruptions and attempts to rationalise such corruptions'.[152] In the seventeenth century, a letter by Sir Thomas Challoner still reported a local tradition associating a chapel at the mouth of the river Tees with Danish bones. Therefore, although no specific battle has yet been confirmed to have occurred in this place, it seems to have been connected to some violent struggle against the Danes in the local population's imagery.[153] The author of *Horn Childe* might thus have appropriated a local tradition still circulating in Northern England at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[154] 'Sibiles' might well be a miswriting of Sulpitius; however, it might also have been a deliberate emendation aimed at celebrating the ancestor of a prominent family. The Oilli family seems to have played a pivotal role in the dissemination of the legend of possibly the main character in the Auchinleck Manuscript, Guy of Warwick.[155] According to Dominica Legge, the legend might have originated in the monastery of Osney on the occasion of the marriage of Margery d'Oilli and the fifth earl of Warwick.[156] The Oilli family was amongst the major benefactors of the monastery. In the Register of Osney Abbey, the name of one Sibilla is mentioned in the context of grants and

[152] Matthew L. Holford, 'A Local Source for Horn Child and Maiden Rimnild', *Medium Ævum*, 74 (2005), pp. 35-7.
[153] Holford, 'A Local Source', p. 35.
[154] Holford, 'A Local Source', p. 38.
[155] A possible association between these families and the legend of Guy of Warwick will be discussed in section 4.4.
[156] Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background*, p. 162.

donations made by Henry II d'Oilli. Sibilla was Henry II's first wife, who must have died before he left for the Third Crusade.[157]

> *About 1200. Confirmation to Oseney, by Henry Doyly II, of all grants made by his ancestors and his tenants; and of the privileges and exemptions conferred in no. 39.*
>
> BE hit i-know to all cristen men both present and to be that I, Henry Doylly þe soone of Henry Doylly, my lorde þe Kynges constable, haue i-grauntid, and with this present charter have i-confermed, to god and to þe church of Seynte Marye of Oseney and to þe chanons þere seruyng god, for my helth and of Sibille my wiffe and of Moolde my dowʒghter and for þe sowles of my fadur and modur and for þe sowle of my broþer Robert Doylly and for þe sowles of all my aunceturs, in-to free and perpetuell almys, all þe possessions of þe church and layfee þe which þey haue of þe ʒiftes of myne auncetur s and of my ʒifte and of þe ʒiftes of my men, as þe charters of them witnysse, with all fredoms and fre customs and quytynges.
>
> *About 1230. Grant to Oseney, by Henry Doyly II, of rent charges to value of £5; made up of, in Kidlington, £3 out of the mill (with surrender of other feudal rights in said mill), the quit rents out of a yardland, messuage, and croft; and, in Hooknorton, 13s. 4d. out of three yardlands, and 8s. out of half a hide, with surrender of feudal rights over the said lands. Grant also of a meadow in Hooknorton.*
>
> KNOWE they þat be present and to be þat I, Henry Doylly, ʒafe and grauntid, and with my present charter confermed, to god and to þe church of Seynte marye of Oseney and to þe chanons þere seruyng god, for my helth and of myne, both predecessours and successours, and specially for þe Sowle of Sibill my wiffe and of moolde my dowʒtter, a hundred shelyng worth of Rente ʒerely, for þe which I haue.

It might be impossible to determine whether Sibilla was buried at Osney in her family chapel, as after the dissolution of the monasteries the abbey had been almost completely destroyed. However, in an eighteenth-century account of the previous state of the Abbey, several unnamed tombs are reported.[158] Although any hypothesis of a connection between the Earls of Warwick and the Auchinleck Manuscript is entirely speculative, this reference to 'Sibiles' still seems to allude to this same family.

Although Horn's deeds are set in Anglo-Saxon England, it proves impossible to determine both King Haþeolf's identity and the historical timespan in which the action takes place. In spite of the apparent geographic accuracy, the relevant historical details are but scarce. All the places mentioned were targeted by the Danes throughout the ninth and the tenth centuries and had also been alternatively under Viking and Anglo-Saxon rule. Haþeolf is merely reported to be the King of Northern England. The additional information regarding the King of Northumberland's invasion

[157] William Betham, *The Baronetage of England, or the History of the English Baronets and such Baronets of Scotland, as are of English Families*, vol 2, London: Lloyd, 1802, p. 401.
[158] John Swaine, *Memoirs of Osney Abbey Near Oxford: Collected from the Most Authentic Authors*, London: W. Harris, 1773, pp. 24-8.

appears of no help to reconstruct any exact historical reference. A battle between Vikings and Anglo-Saxons historically did occur at Stainmoor, in 954 AD. Nevertheless, the Auchinleck redactor could hardly have had any detailed knowledge of this event, since the only chronicle connecting Stainmoor with the end of Eric Bloodaxe's rule is Roger of Wendover's *Flores Historiarum.* In the thirteenth-century chronicle, the Norse king is reported to have been treacherously slain in a wasteland called 'Stainmoor'.[159] This episode is completely absent from all versions of the *Liber Regum Angliae* as well as from William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. The entry for year 954 of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* merely records the defeat of Erik Bloodaxe, 'An. DCCCC.LIIII. Her Norðhymbre fordrifon Yric · ⁊ Ædred feng to Norðhymbra rice'.[160] Yet, in the year mentioned, the King of the English was not Haþeolf, but rather Eadred. In *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle,* King Eadred is depicted as an unremarkable ruler whose realm lasted merely two years.[161]

After Edmund, when he was ded,
Regned his sone Athelred;
Ac he no regned here
Bot vnneþe tvo ȝer. (ll. 1697-1700)

However, Horn's father should not be identified with the King of the English, as in the romance the process of unification completed by King Æthelstan in the first half of the tenth century is described as still under way. He should rather be identified with some lord of considerable standing in Northern England. Although any attempt to find a correspondence between the romance account and historical records cannot but be entirely speculative, it might be worth emphasising that the Oswulf mentioned by the *Flores Historiarum* was in fact the Earl of Bamburgh, one of the last Anglo-Saxon strongholds

[159] 'Anno Domini DCCCCL. Rex Eilricus in quadam solitudine quas 'Steinmor' dicitur, cum filio suo Henrico et fratre Reginaldo, proditione Osulfi comitis, a Macone consule fraudulenter interempti sunt, ac deinde in partibus illis rex Eadredus regnavit.' Roger of Wendover, *Rogeri de Wendover Chronica; sive, Flores Historiarum*, edited by Henry O. Coxe, London: Sumptibus Societatis, 1841, pp. 402-3. 'As a result of Earl Osuf's betrayal, King Erik [Bloodaxe] was slain alongside his son Henry and his brother Reginal by Earl Maccus in a wasteland called 'Steinmoor'. King Eadred subsequently reigned over those lands.' (My translation) As stressed by Stenton, the chronicle wrongly set the date of Erik's death in 950 AD. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 362.
[160] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, according to the Several Original Authorities*, vol 1, edited and translated by Benjamin Thorpe, London: Longman, 1861, p. 215. 'In this year the Northumbrians drove out Eric, and Eadred succeeded to the Northumbrian kingdom'. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 113.
[161] In the Auchinleck *Short Anonymous English Metrical Chronicle*, his name is incorrectly spelled as Athelred. The Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester conversely reports his name correctly (ll. 5614-51). Robert of Gloucester, *The Metrical Chronicle*, vol 1, pp. 410-3.

in Norse Northumbria.[162] Some fifty years later, Oswulf's grandson, Waltheof, was himself forced to defend Northumbria from a Scottish invading army led by Malcom III. The name of the fictional character Haþeolf might thus have been inspired by Oswulf's grandson, Watheolf.

However, one might wonder whether a fourteenth-century London audience might have had such an in-depth knowledge of the geography of Northern England as well as of its remote Anglo-Saxon past. As suggested by Holford, the devastation left by the Danish army might have evoked in the Auchinleck contemporary audience the raids carried out by the Scots during Edward II's realm.[163] Nevertheless, the Auchinleck redactor might not have generally alluded to the continuous plundering of the Northern counties, but rather referred to specific events. The chronicle of Lanercost reports that in 1322 the Scots decided to march on Blackmoor, as King Edward II was reportedly sheltering there.

> Post reditum autem regis Angliae, congregavit rex Scotiae totam fortitudinem suam citra mare Scoticanum et ultra, et de Insulis et Brandanis, et in crastino post sestum sancti Michaelis intravit Angliam apud Solewath, et per quinque dies jacuit ad tria miliaria juxta Karleolum apud Beaumound, et interim misit majorem partem exercitus sui ad destruendum patriam circumquaque, et postea processit in Angliam versus Blakehoumor, quia, propter difficultatem accessus, nunquam prius ibi venerat nec partes illas destruxerat, tum quia certitudinaliter [per] exploratores didicerat regem Anglias ibi esse.[164]

No open battle took place. The Scots merely laid waste the countryside around Blackmoor and took several prisoners and significant booty.[165]

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[162] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 362.
[163] Holford, 'History and Politics', p. 167.
[164] *Chronicon de Lanercost M.CC.I.-MCCCXLVI: e Codice Cottoniano nunc Primum Typis Mandatum* edited by Joseph Stevenson, Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1834, p. 247. 'After the retreat of the King of England the King of Scotland collected all his forces, both on this side of the Scottish sea and beyond it, and from the Isles and from Bute and Arran, and on the day after the feast of S. Michael he invaded England by the Solway and lay for five days at Beaumond, about three miles from Carlisle, and during that time sent the greater part of his force to lay waste the country all around; after which he marched into England to Blackmoor (whither he had never gone before nor laid waste those parts, because of their difficulty of access), having learned for a certainty from his scouts that the King of England was there.' *The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272-1346*, edited and translated by Sir Herbert Maxwell, Glasgow: Maclehose, 1913, p. 239. Thomas Grey's *Scalacronica* reports a similar account. 'The King [Edward II] retired upon York with the great men of his realm; when Robert de Brus having caused to assemble the whole power of Scotland, the Isles and the rest of the Highlands, pressed ever after the King, who, perceiving his approach, marched into Blackhow Moor with all the force that he could muster on a sudden.' Sir Thomas Grey, *Scalacronica: The Reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III*, p. 69.
[165] In previous raids as well, the area of Stainmore was badly pillaged. Colm McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces: Scotland, England and Ireland 1306-1328*, Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1988, pp. 86-141.

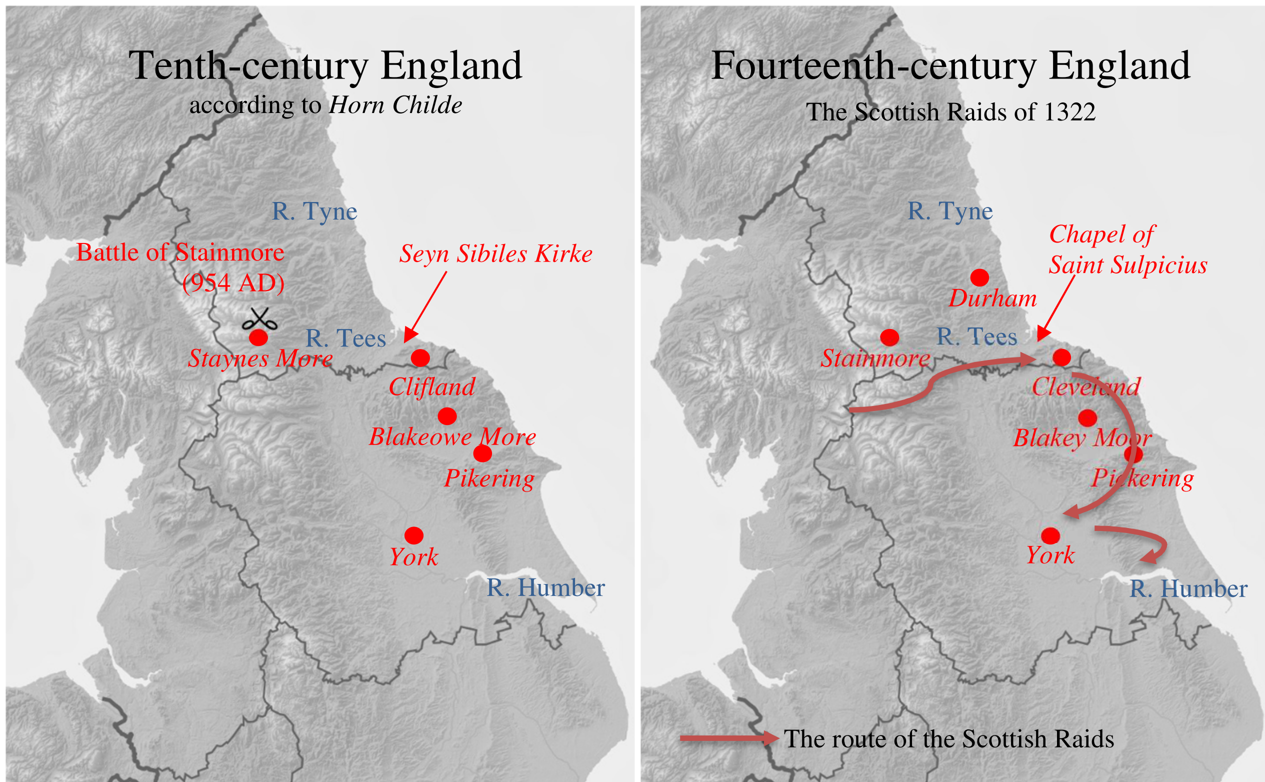

Figure 9. Maps of tenth- and fourteenth-century England[166]

The incursions were extremely successful in demoralising the local communities and in leaving indelible traces in their imagery.[167] Edward II's inertia even forced the Northern counties to seek peace terms on their own.[168] In August 1322, a huge English army tried to fight back by crossing the Border and marching towards Edinburgh. By the end of the month, famine and disease had forced them back, thus transforming a rescue attempt into yet another failure on Edward II's part.[169]

In all other versions of *King Horn*, the battle in which Horn's father loses his life takes place in an unspecified location on a 'someres day'. The Auchinleck account is far more specific: the battle takes place at 'Staynes More' on a Whitsunday, exactly nine months after that on the mouth of the river Tees. Historically speaking, the previously described raids around Blackmore took place shortly after the feast of Saint Michael, on 30 September 1322. The subsequent Whitsunday occurred on 23

[166] The maps above are based on 'Northern England relief map' by Tschubby. Cropped by User: Andrew Dalby, CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Northern_England_relief_map.png [accessed on 15/01/2023]. The map of Anglo-Saxon England has been based on Maldwyn's edition of *Horne Childe*, p. 8, whereas the map showing the Scottish raids has been based on McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces*, pp. 119; 124.
[167] McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces,* p. 89.
[168] McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces,* p. 93.
[169] McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces,* p. 121.

May 1323, thus roughly nine months after the previous raids. Admittedly, the Scottish raids mainly took place in spring / summer and were almost always followed by intensive negotiations.[170] Therefore, the nine-month period as well as the location of the battle could easily apply to several post-Bannockburn incursions. Nevertheless, the Auchinleck redactor specifies that the second Danish horde came from Ireland. Around the mid-tenth century, Northumbria was repeatedly invaded by Vikings settled in Ireland. Therefore, the circumstances reported in *Horn Childe* seems to be consistent with what is known about the Viking invasions of Anglo-Saxon England. A far less solid connection can be established with the Anglo-Scottish conflicts. Yet, in the second decade of the fourteenth century, Robert I's brother, Edward Bruce, led a military campaign in Ireland.[171] After the first successful advance, many Scottish veterans were withdrawn from Ireland and redeployed in Yorkshire,[172] thus possibly providing a model for the invading Irish army described in the romance.

In light of the Anglo-Scottish conflict, the description of Haþeolf's last stand turns sour.

> Now schal men finde kinges fewe
> Þat in batail be so trewe
> His lond for to were. (ll. 202-4)

The Auchinleck redactor sarcastically comments that there are still hardly a handful of kings that would behave like Horn's father. This might well be considered the customary praise of the good old days, but it might also be yet another contemptuous reference to Edward II's disastrous campaign and poor military skills.

It might be worth emphasising that the romances belonging to the 'Matter of England' generally share a general interest in geography, which does not exclusively apply to England, but rather to all those places that might be at least partially familiar to an English audience. For instance, in *Beues of Hamtoun*, the list of the places across which the hero has travelled seems to be some sort of survey of more or less exotic destinations connected to the world of romance (India, Babylon, Saxony,

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[170] McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces,* p. 92.
[171] Edward invaded Ireland in 1315. He henceforth used the title of King of Ireland. McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces,* pp. 96; 189.
[172] McNamee, *The Wars of the Bruces,* p. 98.

Friesland and Dabilent[173]), biblical imagery (Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlem, Emmaus, Sinai and Tarsus) and crusading narrative (Greece, Sicily, Egypt, Sidon, Tyre).

> 'Sire, ich come fro Iurisalem
> Fro Nazareþ & fro Bedlem,
> Emavns castel & Synaie;
> Ynde, Erop and Asie,
> Egippte, Grese and Babiloine,
> Tars, Sesile and Sesaoine,
> In Fris, in Sodeine & in Tire,
> In Aufrik and in mani empire,
> Ac al is pes þar ichaue went,
> Saue in þe lond of Dabilent;
> In pes mai noman come þare,
> Þar is werre, sorwe & care.' (ll. 2261-70)

These lists of place names appear to have been almost a cliché and they do not necessarily imply any specific knowledge of the continent or of the East. The names mentioned might have merely been known by hearsay, possibly through the stories of pilgrims or crusaders on their way back from the Holy Land.[174]

Just like *Of Arthur and of Merlin*, *Horn Childe* as well focuses on the description of the eponymous hero's father. Haþeolf – like Uther – is depicted as the embodiment of the ideal king, a charismatic leader, capable of ruling his country in peace as much as at war. His *largesse*, courtliness and sense of justice make him a model for all future kings. Significantly, this passage is unique to the Auchinleck version, thus possibly reinforcing the impression that the set of values emerging from Haþeolf's description was somehow intended to comply with a specific idea of English epos. After having defeated the first Danish army, Haþeolf divides the booty amongst his men. He does not act out of desire for self-enrichment, but rather with justness and magnanimity by sharing the spoils with those who fought bravely on his side.

> Hende Haþeolf, as y ȝou say,
> Duelled þer þe niȝen day,
> Þe folk of him was fain.
> Þai toke anon þat ich pray,
> Schepe & nete þat þer slain lay,
> & ȝaf it þe folk oȝain;
> Armour & brini briȝt
> He ȝaf to squier & to kniȝt,

[173] Dabilent is described in this romance as the kingdom of Yvor's brother.
[174] The Auchinleck version also shows an interest for Italian geography. Calabria, Tuscany, Rome, Apulia might have been known to an English audience through the pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

To seriaunt & to swayn.
Schipes he dede to lond drawe
& ȝaf to bondmen on rawe
For her catel was slayn. (ll. 85-96)

Edward II proved to be a rather different kind of king. The chronicle of Lanercost sadly laments that, on his way to Scotland, the English monarch pillaged the monasteries instead of endowing them with oblations.

> Ubi autem nobilis Edwardus pater suus eundo ad bellandum in Scotia solebat sanctos Angliae Thomam Cantuariae, Edmundum, Hugonem, Willelmum, Cuthbertum, in suo itinere visitare, et eis pulchras oblationes offerre et se eorum orationibus commendare, monasteriis etiam et pauperibus largas elemosinas ministrare, iste nihil horum faciens, cum pompa magna et apparatu cusioso venien, bona monasteriorum in itinere accepit, et in praegiuditium et iniuriam sanctorum, aliqua fecit et dixit.[175]

Haþeolf demonstrates the whole extent of his ability as a military leader not only by knighting those who outlived the day, 'Sexti dubbed he þer to kniȝt | & ȝaf hem riche mede.' (ll. 101-2), but also by having several chantries built for the sake of those who fell on the battlefield, '& seþþen he dede chirches make | To sing for þe dedes sake' (ll. 106-7).

Horn's father also proves to be a skilled politician. Since Horn's companions have lost their fathers in battle, Haþeolf entrusts them with their lawful inheritance, 'Þe lond þat þai held of me | Alle y ȝiue ȝou here fre' (ll. 130-1). However, everything comes at a price: Haþeolf asks them to swear allegiance to his son in return, thus essentially securing a solid core of supporters for the future king.

'Wiþ Horn mi sone y wil ȝe be,
As ȝour faders han ben wiþ me,
& oþes ȝe schul him swere
Þat ȝe schal neuer fram him fle
For gold no siluer, lond no fe,
Oȝein outlondis here.' (ll. 133-8)

Haþeolf's skills at playing the harp cannot but emphasise his ability as a ruler, as the harp is taken as the very symbol of the perfect harmony in the realm.[176] If Horn is associated with harp playing in

[175] *Chronicon de Lanercost M.CC.I.-MCCCXLVI,* p. 224 'And whereas when his noble father Edward went on a campaign in Scotland, he used to visit on his march ⟨the shrines of⟩ the English saints, Thomas of Canterbury, Edmund, Hugh, William, and Cuthbert, offering fair oblations, commending himself to their prayers, and also bestowing liberal gifts to monasteries and the poor, this ⟨king⟩ did none of these things ; but marching with great pomp and elaborate state, he took goods from the monasteries on his journey, and, as was reported, did and said things to the prejudice and injury of the saints.' *The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272-1346,* p. 206.

[176] Mary Hynes-Berry, 'Cohesion in King Horn and Sir Orfeo', *Speculum*, 50 (1975), p. 669.

both the Anglo-Norman and the other Middle English versions, the same cannot be said of his father, whose musical skills are uniquely celebrated in *Horn Childe*. The Auchinleck redactor might thus have wanted to trace some sort of genealogy of yet another of Horn's striking features: his talent with the harp. Furthermore, the emphasis on this musical instrument unveils an entire network of intertextual allusions all revolving around the idea of good government and personal identity. King David, Sir Orfeo and Sir Tristrem find the righteous places in the Auchinleck collection, each in a text exclusively devoted to him.[177] However, although both Haþeolf / Horn and Orfeo share equal musical talent, their ability as leaders appears substantially different. Orfeo lacks both their military and political skills, as he is first incapable of setting up a fight to save his wife from the Fairy King and then he even abandons his realm out of grief at the loss of her.

Since the characteristics of ideal kingship appear to hold centre stage in the first part, it comes as no surprise that equal emphasis is also given to Horn's instruction. The lengthy description of Horn's education is unique to the Auchinleck Manuscript, as the other Middle English versions appear to collapse the whole process in a mere couple of lines: 'Horn Child, thou understond, | Tech him of harpe ant of song.'[178] Musical training is the sole detail retained by all versions. In *Horn Childe*, the eponymous hero's education in courtly activities, such as harp playing, hunting and horse riding is given great prominence, as though the Auchinleck redactor wanted to emphasise that martial skills are only one side of a good king's competencies.

> Haþeolf Arlaund bitauȝt
> Horn & his children auȝt
> To lern hem to ride. (ll. 46-8)
>
> Alle were þai cloþed in o wede
> To ride on palfray oþer on stede,
> Wheþer hem leuer ware.
> Hor[n] was boþe war & wise,
> At hunting oft he wan þe priis,
> Loued he noþing mare;

[177] Significantly, this is not the sole instance of intertextuality that can be detected in *Horn Childe*. Shortly after the description of Maiden Rimnild, the Auchinleck redactor introduces a literary reference to the story of Tristan and Isolde – which incidentally is narrated in another text from the Auchinleck collection, *Sir Tristrem*. 'Loued neuer childer mare | Bot Tristrem or Ysoud it ware | Whoso rede ariȝt.' (ll. 310-2)
[178] Susanna Fein, 'The Geste of Kyng Horn' in *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, vol. 2, edited by Susanna Fein, David Raybin, Jan Ziolkowski, TEAMS Middle English Texts https://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/fein-harley2253-volume-2-article-70 [accessed on 07/01/2023]

Harpe & romaunce he radde ariȝt,
Of al gle he hadde insiȝt
Þat in lond ware. (ll. 280-8)

Although Haþeolf has already been slain by Malkan and thus Horn's prospects as future king have changed accordingly, he is instructed in legal matters as well. The knowledge of the laws 'boþe eld & newe' seems to imply that the restoration of justice was considered the primary duty of any knight and king.

He bad Harlaund schuld him lere
Þe riȝt for to se,
Þe lawes boþe eld & newe,
Al maner gamen & glewe;
In bok þus rede we. (ll. 272-6)

As soon as Horn reaches Wales his path is hindered by a local knight who threatens him either to surrender his property or to joust with him. Horn is disoriented by the knight's awkward requests, as he realises that the realm he has just entered is apparently characterised by some sort of legal vacuum. His first impression is confirmed by the Welsh king's habit of testing his retinue's prospective knights in a series of exhausting tournaments, thus possibly implying that he could only enforce law by martial value.[179] The Welsh king essentially lacks the courtly and legal abilities in which Horn has been duly trained.

One last thought should be given to Horn's recovery of his father's inheritance. Before setting off to reconquer his father's lands and waging war against the King of Northumberland, he is entrusted with Malkan's estates in return for his help to defend the realm of the Welsh king's son. Therefore, he succeeds not only in avenging his father's death by killing Malkan himself, but also in expanding his possessions.[180] The portrait of the ideal English king is thus that of a conqueror, skilled in martial arts as much as in courtly entertainment. Furthermore, in *Beues of Hamtoun*, *Of Arthour and of Merlin* and *Guy of Warwick*, England is already depicted as a united kingdom, whereas in *Horn Childe* the unification process is still ongoing. Just like the historical king Æthelstan,[181] who succeeded in

[179] Rouse, 'English Identity', p. 79.
[180] Holford, 'History and Politics', p. 155.
[181] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 340; 349.

unifying the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Mercia, Wessex and York, so Horn becomes the lawful ruler of King Malkan's Irish estates, Northumberland as well as of King Houlac's realm, by marriage with Rimnild. In Holford's words, 'Horn Childe would then be a narrative which culminated not simply in the recovery of Horn's patrimony of Northumberland, but in the emergence of the kingdom as a whole under a single ruler'.[182] This emphasis on the expansion of the English rule over neighbouring countries appears to be fully consistent with the preoccupations pervading the whole collection. After all, Horn, Hengist, Brutus and Edward I all managed to establish themselves as the kings of the whole island. In the light of the defeat at Bannockburn and the subsequent Scottish raids, this text might have been perceived as a painful remainder of the tragic state of the Northern counties, as well as of the consequences of the rule of a weak king, lacking political as much as martial abilities.

4.3 Disinherited heroes: *Beues of Hamtoun*

The story of Beues of Hamtoun appears to be yet another example of the pattern outlined for *Horn Childe.* A disinherited son is forced to grow up in a foreign country only to return in due time to claim what was rightfully his. Nevertheless, Beues' rehabilitation proves only apparent. He does succeed in regaining his father's inheritance, but he is forced to pass it over to one of his old friends. His exile becomes permanent, as though he had become unsuitable for reintegration in English society. *Beues of Hamtoun* is not unique to the Auchinleck collection, but rather survives in four additional manuscripts: the late fourteenth century London, British Library, Egerton MS 2862 (Trentham-Sutherland), the late fifteenth century Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38, the roughly contemporary Cambridge, Caius Cambridge, MS 175, as well as Naples, Royal Library XIII.B.29. All these versions share an interesting change in metre some five hundred lines into the romance. The six-line tail-rhyme stanzas are in fact abruptly replaced by rhyming couplets. Ongoing metrical changes are certainly not unprecedented; however, they usually take place at meaningful points in the narrative. For instance, in *Guy of Warwick* the shift from couplets to tail-rhyme stanzas

[182] Holford, 'History and Politics', p. 157.

occurs immediately after Guy's successfully slaying the dragon attacking Northumberland. In *Beues of Hamtoun*, the change happens at line 475, when Beues is about to be sold to Saracen merchants.[183] A. C. Baugh points out that this same change takes place in the Anglo-Norman original as well. Up to *laisse* 66 (corresponding to line 415) the *laisses* are short – generally six lines – thus perfectly fitting the six-line tail-rhyme metre chosen by the Middle English translators, whereas the subsequent *laisses* are much longer. Therefore, the Middle English redactors might have found the rhyming couplets the only viable option to replace the Anglo-Norman long *laisses*.[184] However, the reasons behind the original change have not yet been uncovered.

Beues' story proves an intricate intermingling of continuous complications, countless characters and itinerant locations. The Auchinleck poem begins with the Earl of Southampton's decision to take a young wife in spite of his old age. The couple succeeds in begetting an heir: Beues. Shortly afterwards, Beues' father is ambushed by the German emperor, who murders him to please his young lover, the Earl of Southampton's wife. The orphaned Beues is sold to Saracen merchants and subsequently taken by King Ermin and trained as a knight. Ermin's daughter, Josian, falls in love with him and decides to convert to Christianity. Beues is falsely accused to have lain with her and thrown into a dungeon, where he remains for seven years. Beues at last manages to escape and rescue Josian, who had meanwhile been forced to marry King Yvor. After several adventures, Beues regains his father's properties and is recognised as Lord of Hampshire. The newly married Beues and Josian travel to King Edgar's court in London; however, they are immediately forced to flee, as Arundel, Beues' horse, kills the king's son. Josian gives birth to their twin sons, Miles and Guy, but she is suddenly kidnapped by Yvor's men. Beues succeeds once again in rescuing his wife and the whole family is again re-united. They travel to Armenia and provide military help to King Ermin, who is besieged by King Yvor's army. Ermin dies and Beues' son Guy is made his heir. Beues' uncle and

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[183] In both London, British Library, Egerton MS 2862 and Naples, Royal Library XIII.B.29, the change takes place slightly afterwards, at line 528. Ivana Djordjevic, 'Versification and Translation in *Sir Beues of Hamtoun*', *Medium Ævum*, 74 (2005), p. 42.

[184] Djordjevic, 'Versification and Translation', p. 42.

instructor, Saber, is reached by the news that King Edgar has seized his lands. Beues unsuccessfully tries to regain his uncle's lands through legal appeal, but once again King Edgar proves incapable of administering justice. After fierce fighting Edgar decides to seal a peace treaty consisting in offering his daughter and kingdom to Beues' other son, Miles. Twenty years later, Josian, Beues and his horse, Arundel, all die the same day.

The historical background before which Beues' adventures unfold is provided by the realm of King Edgar. The tenth-century Anglo-Saxon king is depicted as vain and inclined to unjust wrath. His reign is a disheartening record of episodes of maladministration. He fails to protect Beues' inheritance at his father's death, he rashly passes a death sentence on him without previously consulting his lords and he unlawfully seizes the lands of Beues' uncle with no apparent reason. King Edgar proves incapable of distinguishing good and bad advice and wages yet another civil war only to be forced to surrender and offer his daughter and realm as a token of peace. This Edgar appears to be more a figure of Edward II than of the Anglo-Saxon King described in the *Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle.* In the Auchinleck version of the *Liber Regum Angliae*, King Edgar is in fact depicted as a saint, 'Seynt Edgar' (ll. 1712; 1781) and as a skilled and just ruler. His realm is characterised by a strict enforcement of the law as well as by the king's strong commitment to maintaining peace and justice throughout his realm.

In *Beues of Hamtoun*, the barons are conversely portrayed as the guarantors of the country's laws so blatantly ignored by the king. They in fact succeed in curbing Edgar's vengeful reaction at the death of his son by outlining that Beues cannot be held responsible for his horse's crime. Beues is innocent. Arundel should be hanged for treason, not he. In romances, unlike in real life, the English kings could not dispose of their enemies as they wished.[185] However, Beues appears to disagree with the barons' judgement. After all, Arundel acted in self-defence, as the prince tried to kidnap him. He soon realises that he could not simultaneously save his horse and remain in his country. He sets off

[185] Rouse, 'English Identity', p. 81. England's medieval kings had all too well demonstrated the full extent of their wrath. For instance, Edward II had those responsible of Gaveston's death summarily executed. See Chapter 2.1.

immediately, essentially leaving his properties and his English identity behind.[186] The unjustified disinheriting of Saber's son cannot but be considered yet another instance of Edgar's incompetence and capriciousness. The reduplication of narrative patterns creates an effect of amplification in which the King's reckless administration of the law almost escalates into tyranny.

> 'Sire' a sede, 'þe king Edgare
> Þe driueþ to meche te bismare,
> Desereteþ Robaunt þin eyr.' (ll. 4087-9)

Just like Guy of Warwick, Beues immediately sides with the wronged part and supports his uncle's claim by petitioning his case to the king's court in London. Significantly, this legal digression is absent from the Anglo-Norman original, in which Beues directly reaches Edgar's court at the head of a powerful army. Edgar is thus immediately forced to search for peace terms. In *Horne Childe*, the King is easily convinced by Beues' courteous argumentation and is even about to comply with his request. Nevertheless, his inclination to trust treacherous stewards and counsellors overcomes his better judgement. Beues is proclaimed an outlaw and is forced to defend himself in a fierce battle across the streets of London. Beues succeeds in forfeiting the king's army with the help of his most valiant sons. Edgar is defeated and humiliated.

> 'Tiding com to king Edgar
> Þat Beues hadde his men forfare;
> For is borgeis in is cite
> He made del and gret pite
> & seide 'ichaue leued me lif
> Longe wiþouten werre & strif
> & now icham so falle in elde
> Þat I ne may min armes welde.
> Twei sones Beues haþ wiþ him brouȝt,
> Þarfore hit is in me þouȝt,
> Miles his sone me douȝter take;
> In þis maner is pes to make.' (ll. 4363-74)

The King's naive comment cannot but emphasise his inadequacy. He admits that his experience in terms of warfare is very limited, as he has spent his long life without 'werre & strif'. Edgar thus proves to lack those martial skills that are described as so fundamental in the Auchinleck *Chronicle*.

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[186] Robert Rouse, 'Chronicle and Romance', p. 393.

Any warrior king, such as Hengist, Richard I and Edward I should in fact excel in ruling the country at peace as much as at war.

By any standards, he is an unworthy king, as he fails his primary duty towards his subjects: their defence. A king is in fact supposed to protect his realm not only from foreign attacks, but also from inner strife by maintaining peace and justice. The 'legal preoccupations' emerging from *Horn Childe, Beues of Hamtoun* and generally from the romances belonging to the 'Matter of England' might have originated in the degenerate state of the administration of the law throughout the Middle Ages. According to Robert Rouse, the disillusionment provoked by the customary abuse of power as well as by the impossibility of obtaining justice found its literary expression either in satire, or in romances staging the deeds of outlaws, or by romanticising the old good days in which England was ruled fairly and justly.[187] Yet, *Beues of Hamtoun* could hardly fall into any of the abovementioned categories, as Beues is not a figure for Robin Hood, the portrait of the Anglo-Saxon king is anything but flattering and the whole romance cannot even be described as satire, though admittedly England appears to be as unjustly ruled in the tenth century as in the fourteenth.

In *Beues of Hamtoun,* the allusion to almost contemporary events might not have been limited to the king's portrait. The episode of Beues' fight in London might in fact be reminiscent of Monfort's struggle against Henry III's army, in 1263. The King of England was informed that Monfort was outside the walls of London with a relatively small force. Some of the king's supporters arranged for the gates of London to be shut against him. The King immediately raised the siege at Dover castle and went straight to London assured that Monfort could at last be taken relatively easily. Nevertheless, London citizens uncovered the secret plan and managed to unchain the gates and let Monfort and his army in. Henry III was faced with no alternative, but to retreat unless he wanted to fight street by street surrounded by an angry mob. Just like King Edgar, so Henry III was forced to negotiate a

[187] Robert Rouse, 'English Identity and the Law in *Havelok the Dane*, *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild* and *Beues of Hamtoun*' in *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, edited by Corinne Saunders, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005, p. 72.

truce.[188] Yet, the emphasis on the loyal and mutually supportive relationship between Beues and his horse might remind the audience of yet another contemporary event involving one of the Earls of Arundel, the same family whose fictional genealogy has been alluded to in this romance. In the civil war that saw Edward II and his favourites Despensers on the one side and Roger Mortimer and Isabella on the other, Edmund Fizalan, second Earl of Arundel, sided with the king. In 1326, he was captured and executed as a traitor on Mortimer's order. His properties were forfeited and granted to Mortimer and Isabella's supporters.[189] Nevertheless, after the execution of Mortimer, Edward III was inclined to show the whole extent of his magnanimity by moderating his vengeance. In an instance of breath-taking revisionism, he rehabilitated Edmund Fitzalan as a victim of the Mortimer regime. His son was thus allowed to regain his title and properties. [190]

One last thought should be given to the location of the marriage between Miles and Edgar's daughter. In the Anglo-Norman original, the wedding ceremony is celebrated in London, the place in which the king's court is held, whereas, in this version, the action is moved to Nottingham: 'Þe maide & Miles wer spused same | In þe toun of Notinghame' (ll. 4385-6). This change appears unique to the Auchinleck Manuscript as all other Middle English redactions either mention no location for the wedding or set it in London.[191] Yet, there is no apparent reason for the Auchinleck redactor to move the action to the North. Both the Royal court and Beues' own estates are in fact located in Southern England. One might argue that the change might have been prompted by metrical constraints: the preservation of the rhyming pattern in *-ame*. Nevertheless, one is tempted to find a more meaningful explanation. As mentioned in the previous chapters, Nottingham is the city in which Mortimer and Isabella were captured. In tenth- as much as in fourteenth-century England, peace can only be restored when the reckless ruling of the country is brought to an end and a new generation of kings is allowed

[188] Weiss, 'The Major Interpolations in "Sir Beues of Hamtoun"', p. 74.
[189] Ormrod, *Edward III*, p. 46.
[190] Ormrod, *Edward III*, p. 95.
[191] *The Romance of Sir Beues of Hamtoun*, edited by Eugen Kölbing, London: Trübner, p. 215.

to rule on their own. Edgar and Miles might thus become figures for Mortimer and Edward III respectively.

Although both featuring English heroes, *Horn Childe* and *Beues of Hamtoun* substantially diverge in the portrait of their eponymous characters. Both Guy of Hamtoun and his son Beues are certainly characterised by prowess in arms; nevertheless, they also present a degree of naivety, which will be fatal to the former and almost so to the latter. As stressed by Gary Lim, the romance offers an unflattering portrait of Beues' father. He demonstrates a complete lack of judgement, as he decides to take a young wife in his old age. His martial prowess and his heroic last stand prevent a direct connection with the *senes amantes* populating medieval *fabliaux*; nevertheless, this redactor indirectly seems to allude to this tradition.[192]

> Man, whan he falleþ into elde,
> Feble a wexeþ and vnbelde
> Þourȝ riȝt resoun. (ll. 46-8)

Guy's portrait reveals a stark contrast between form and substance: in his old age, he is but a caricature of his previous self. The audience cannot fail to notice that his heroic traits derive more from his perception of himself than from his actual physical prowess. Guy firmly believes that he deserves the love and respect of his young and beautiful wife, given his achievements in peace as much as at war. His old age has numbed his wits to such an extent that even at the very moment in which he is ambushed he fails to understand that his own wife is behind the treason. Guy of Hamtoun is definitely not a good father. His mistake will tragically fall upon his son, who will be forced to fight throughout his life to be rehabilitated. Therefore, the Auchinleck redactor sadly curses the very moment in which Guy of Hamtoun took the reckless decision to marry.

> Allas þat he hire euer ches!
> For hire loue his lif a les
> Wiþ mechel vnriȝt. (ll. 28-30)

Guy's wife is perfectly aware of her husband's poor judgment in terms of his physical strength. She derides his claim to be still a valorous warrior, by pretending to be sick and that only a wild boar

[192] Gary Lim, 'In the Name od the (Dead) Father: reading Fathers and Sons in Havelok the Dane, King Horn, and Bevis of Hampton', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 110 (2011), p. 31.

could heal her. Guy of Hamtoun trusts his wife and ventures into the forest alone. His brave last stand cannot overcome the sense of Guy's inadequacy pervading the subsequent lines. The old Earl of Southampton is ready to give up his life on condition that his assailant, the German emperor, promises to look after not only his son, but also his beautiful wife. Guy's childish naivety almost turns his tragic death into a comic interlude.

> Merci, sire, ase þow ert fre,
> Al þat ichaue I graunte þe,
> Boute me wif.
> For þine men þat ichaue slawe,
> Haue her me swerd idrawe
> And al me fe;
> Boute me ȝonge sone Bef
> And me wif þat is me lef
> Þat let þow me.' (ll. 262-70)

Significantly, the episode of the boar-hunt is reduplicated in a later section of the narrative, when Beues himself takes on the perilous task.

> Beues lay in is bedde aniȝt
> And þouȝte, a wolde keþen is miȝt
> Vpon þat swin him self one,
> Þat noman scholde wiþ him gone. (ll. 751-4)

In romances, the hunt of the wild boar was considered the quintessential demonstration of a knight's bravery. For instance, in the later fourteenth-century *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Sir Bertilak even confronts the wild beast on foot, using a mere sword, thus essentially demonstrating incredible courage.

> He lyȝtes luflych adoun, leuez his corsour,
> Braydez out a bryȝt bront and bigly forth strydez,
> Foundez fast þurȝ þe forth þer þe felle bydez. (ll. 1583-5)[193]

The Gawain-poet provides a meticulous description of the technique used for boar-hunting and emphasises that it is undoubtedly a communal enterprise in which mounted knights, archers, beaters and hounds equally play a pivotal role. In this light, Beues' solitary hunt almost amounts to a romantic adventure. The outcome of Beues' exploit is rather different from his father's, as he not only succeeds

[193] *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript,* edited by Andrew Malcolm and Waldron Ronald, Exeter: Liverpool University Press, 2007, p. 266.

in killing the boar, but also in earning the best sword ever, Morgelai, ‘Beter swerd bar neuer kniȝt’ (l. 862).

Only a few lines earlier, Beues has declared that were he given the chance to ride a horse and bear arms he would certainly avenge his father.

> Ac, sire, ȝif it euer so betide
> Þat ich mowe an horse ride
> And armes bere & scheft tobreke,
> Me fader deþ ich schel wel wreke. (ll. 549-52)

In Anglo-Norman society, horses and swords were considered the essential equipment of knights and, by extension, the representation of their identity as *bellatores*. In *Guy of Warwick*, the eponymous hero even goes so far as to affirm that no one can be considered a proper knight if he cannot claim to possess a horse, ‘Kniȝtes riȝt is it non | Þat he schuld fer o fot gon’ (6439-40). In romances and *chansons de geste*, the sword is considered the knightly weapon *par excellence*. Arthur’s Excalibur, Charlemagne’s Joyeuse, Roland’s Durendal cannot but testify to the habit of naming the swords of the greatest historical or legendary kings and heroes, as though these weapons could live a life of their own. Both Guy of Warwick and Horn possess almost magical swords – although not mentioned by name – which are given to them at crucial points in the narrative. The former finds a marvellous sword in a cave shortly before one of his single combats, whereas the latter wields a sword forged by a blacksmith as mythical as Weland himself.

> Horn’s sword:
> ‘It is þe make of Miming,
> Of al swerdes it is king
> & Weland it wrouȝt.
> Bitterfer þe swerd hiȝt,
> Better swerd bar neuer kniȝt (ll. 400-4)

Nevertheless, the emphasis on weapons and horses is also typical of German folklore. In the *Völsunga Saga*, Sigurðr, like Beues, has lost his father Sigmundr in battle and is forced to leave the court. Kings Álfr thus seizes Sigmundr’s throne and marries his widow, Hjördís. Sigurðr’s education is entrusted to the blacksmith Reginn, who urges him to ask the new king for a horse, the very symbol of military aristocracy. The king complies with Sigurðr’s request. Shortly afterwards Sigurðr also succeeds in having his father’s sword *Gram* re-forged. Sigurðr is thus not a ‘sveínn’ (boy) any longer, but rather

a young warrior, Sigurðr 'ungr'.[194] Significantly, the story of Sigurðr is still one of disinheritance and subsequent rise to power. Sigurðr, like Beues, does not merely inherit his father's possessions and titles, but is the architect of his own fortune.

Though admittedly not a coward, Beues proves as naïve as his father. He succeeds in defeating King Brademond, who was waging war against the realm of Josian's father, but instead of killing him or taking him prisoner, he releases him upon payment of a tribute. The Auchinleck redactor sadly comments that his imprudence will cost him dear, 'Allas, þat he nadde him slawe' (l. 1063). Nevertheless, Ermin proves to be just as easily deceived. Out of envy, one of the king's chamberlains convinces him that the young Beues has lain with his daughter Josian. King Ermin is not even brave enough to accuse Beues publicly or to challenge him honourably. He rather prefers to send him to Brademond's court with a sealed letter demanding his own death. Interestingly, on his way to Brademond's castle, Beues meets Saber's son, Terri, who suggests he reads the letter before handing it over to the king.

> 'Me þenkeþ þow ert a masager
> Þat in þis londe walkes her;
> Icham a clerk and to scole ȝede.
> Sire, let me þe letter rede
> For þow miȝt haue gret doute
> Þin owene deþ to bere aboute.'
> Beues seide, ich vnderstonde
> 'He þat me tok þis letter an honde,
> He ne wolde [loue] me non oþer
> Þan ich were is owene broþer.' (ll. 1323-32)

Unlike what happens in *Horn Childe*, in *Beues of Hamtoun* little information is provided about the eponymous hero's education. Therefore, it is uncertain whether Beues refuses to open the letter out of loyalty to Ermin or because he is simply illiterate. In any case, Beues also refuses the help of Terri who volunteered to read the letter for him. The Middle English redactor might have wanted to suggest that since Beues has grown up amongst pagan merchants, he has not been given a proper instruction.

[194] *La Morte di Sigurdr*, edited by Marcello Meli, Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2006, pp. 12-7. Marcello Meli, *Di Eroi, di Stelle e Di Parole, Scritti Scelti di Marcello Meli*, Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2022, pp. 157-72.

Although admittedly not as perfect as Horn in terms of experience and education, Beues is raised to the rank of the greatest. The episode in which he is about to confront two fearsome dragons is preceded by a few lines listing the names of knights who undertook a similar feat: Lancelot, Wade and Guy of Warwick.

> After Iosian is cristing
> Beues dede a gret fiȝting.
> Swich bataile dede neuer non
> Cristene man of flesch ne bon
> Of a dragoun þer beside
> Þat Beues slouȝ þer in þat tide
> Saue sire Launcelet de Lake;
> He fauȝt wiþ a fur drake,
> And Wade dede also,
> & neuer kniȝtes boute þai to.
> Gij a Warwik, ich vnderstonde,
> Slouȝ a dragoun in Norþhomberlonde. (ll. 2421-32)

This passage is completely absent from the Anglo-Norman original, whereas the other Middle English versions only mention Lancelot and Guy of Warwick. None of them reports the name of Wade. The *Tale of Wade* has unfortunately been lost. The few details available have been inferred from other texts. Yet, it must have been still relatively popular at the end of the fourteenth century, as it is mentioned by Chaucer in both *The Merchant's Tale* and *Troilus and Criseyde*.[195] Nevertheless, a version of the legend of Wade appears in a poem based on Saxon materials, the early thirteenth-century Norse Saga *Thidreks*. In this context, the legend of Wade is associated with that of the mythical blacksmith Weland.[196] Significantly, the Auchinleck version of *King Horn* also alludes to the legend of Weland in relation to Horn's sword.[197] Therefore, although the romances belonging to the 'Matter of England' undoubtedly retain several elements derived from the continental tradition, they might also substantially draw on the repertoire of Anglo-Saxon folklore.

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[195] Nevertheless, it is associated with the slaying of a dragon in neither of them. 'He song; she pleyde; he tolde tale of Wade.' (*Troilus and Criseyde*, III.614); 'And eek thise olde widwes, God it woot, | They conne so muchel craft, on Wades boot, | So muchel broken harm, whan that hem leste, | That with hem sholde I never live in reste.' (*The Merchant's Tale*, ll. 1423-6) *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 522; 156. Significantly, yet another reference to Wade can be detected in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, 'Were thou wighter than Wade or Wawain either, | Thou winnes no worship, I warn thee before.' (ll. 963-4) *King Arthur's Death: The Middle English Stanzaic Morte Arthur and Alliterative Morte Arthure*, edited by Larry D. Benson, revised by Edward E. Foster, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications for TEAMS, 1994.
[196] Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'Chaucer and the Lost Tale of Wade', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 65 (1966), p. 275.
[197] Neither the Anglo-Norman nor the other Middle English versions of *King Horn* mention the legend of Weland.

Beues of Hamtoun's different group affiliations demonstrate the extent to which any straightforward definition of his identity might be problematic. Although Beues was born an English nobleman, he is forced to grow up amongst Saracen merchants. Later in his life, he marries a Saracen princess conveniently converted to Christianity. Beues' possessions in England are entrusted to his friend Tirri, whereas one of his sons, Guy, succeeds his grandfather on the Armenian throne, whereas the other inherits the English crown by marriage with King Edgar's daughter.[198] Beues becomes King of another Eastern region, Mombraunt, after having defeated in single combat the treacherous King Yvor. One might argue that Beues finds himself in the same position as any of the kings of the Crusader States, as the set of his allegiances stretches from West to East. The intermingling of complementary identities does not appear to be an exception, but rather a customary feature of the crusading context.[199] The Christian strongholds in the Holy Land were in fact characterised by a cosmopolitan community of knights, pilgrims and soldiers all united by a sole faith. Therefore, one might wonder whether the crusaders who settled in the Christian domains in the Holy Land exclusively claimed for themselves a Christian identity or if they felt to belong to England, France, or Germany on the grounds of their families' origins.[200]

One last thought should be given to a crucial passage in Beues' narrative absent from the Anglo-Norman original. Saber Florentine, Bishop of Cologne, offers his military support to help Beues regain his English possessions.

Þe beschop seide anonriȝt
'Kosin, Saber þin em is in Wiȝt,
& eueri ȝer on a dai certaine
Vpon þemperur of Almaine
He ginneþ gret bataile take,
Beues, al for þine sake;
He weneþ wel þat þow be ded;
Þarfore, kosin, be me red,
An hondred men ich ȝeue þe wiȝte
Aȝen þemperur to fiȝte,
Stalworde men and fer. (ll. 2739-49)

[198] Thomas H. Crofts, Robert Allen Rouse, 'Middle English Popular Romance and National Identity', in *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance*, edited by Raluca L. Radulescu and Cory James Rushton, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009, p. 83.
[199] Crofts, Rouse, 'Middle English Popular Romance', p. 84.
[200] The staging of the hero's multiple identities will be explored in the next sections.

Beues gladly accepts the bishop's suggestion and plans a way to deceive the German emperor and enter his court unrecognised. Beues and his companions agree to disguise as French knights.

> 'Lordinges' to his men a sede,
> 'ȝe scholle do be mine rede.
> Haue ich eni so hardi on
> Þat dorre to Hamtoun gon,
> To þemperur of Almaine,
> And sai her comeþ a vintaine,
> Al prest an hondred kniȝte,
> Þat fore his loue wilen fiȝte
> Boþe wiþ spere & wiþ launce,
> Al fresch icome out of Fraunce?
> Ac euer an orneste & a rage,
> Euer spekeþ Fre[n]sche laungage,
> And sai ich hatte Gerard
> And fiȝte ich wile be forward,
> And of þe meistri icham sure
> ȝif he wile ȝilde min hure.' (ll. 2781-96)

The choice to use a different language might certainly stem from practical reasons. Admittedly, when Beues first left his homeland, he was a mere child. Therefore, the emperor could hardly have recognised him on the grounds of his physical appearance. His southern English accent could conversely have betrayed his identity. Nevertheless, the emphasis on the 'Fre[n]sche laungage' as part of their disguise might also imply that Beues and his companions usually used another language to communicate, thus essentially confirming what has been claimed in the prologues of *King Richard* and *Of Arthour and of Merlin* about the scarce presence of French-speaking nobles in England. The soldiers provided by the bishop of Cologne could hardly have spoken any English and yet the nationalistic effect is reached all the same. Furthermore, Beues' specific choice to disguise as a French knight might all too well reveal the fourteenth-century preoccupations involving the identification of distinctive English / French features. This hypothesis might find support in another instance of disguise. In *Guy of Warwick* as well, the eponymous hero plans to deceive Duke Otus by disguising himself as the squire Yon, 'Yon, men clepet me in mi cuntre.' (l. 5798).

> Gij him diȝt in a queyntise
> & com to Paui in squier wise.
> An vnement purchast he
> Þat made his visage out of ble.
> His here þat was ȝalu & briȝt
> Blac it bicome anonriȝt. (ll. 5723-9)

Nevertheless, in order to succeed, he needs to dye his hair and stain his face. This passage is already present in the Anglo-Norman original,[201] thus possibly implying that one century earlier, effective disguise could only be achieved through the substantial transformation of one's outward appearance. In romances as much as in real life, thirteenth-century English and French knights were in fact likely to have shared the same (Anglo-Norman) language.

As argued by Crofts and Rouse, Beues and Josian never seem to be able to (re)adapt to English life, so much so that they return to their Eastern possessions even when the peace with King Edgar has been made.[202] After all, Beues' experience in England is all but reassuring: he is disinherited twice and twice is forced to leave his country and rebuild his life abroad. The disheartening portrait of King Edgar cannot but reinforce the idea of disillusionment for the poor state of the royal rule. If Beues is to be considered the embodiment of the ideal national hero, one might wonder what kind of hero he will stand for. Beues is admittedly an outcast, one who will never be re-integrated in English society. His martial prowess and heroic stature can only partially overcome Beues' inadequacy to fulfil his baronial duties in his native context.

Both *Beues of Hamtoun* and *Horn Childe* are characterised by political crisis provoked by the disruption of the line of inheritance. Although Anglo-Saxon England was perceived as some sort of golden age in terms of law, these romances demonstrate all too well the extent to which the king's inadequacy and inability to distinguish good and bad advice could undermine the stability of the realm. The emphasis on injustice and disinheritance cannot but mirror the fourteenth-century baronial preoccupations about the king's administration of justice. Finally, ancient and recent history, Anglo-Saxon folklore, continental traditions, religious affiliations and loyalty towards one's king and country all seem to participate in the effort to define the English national identity.

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[201] 'Gui a Pavie s'en ala, | En guise d'esquier s'apareilla, | Un oignement puis ad pris, | Teint en ad trestut sun vis, | E ses crins, qui erent blois pur veirs, | Teint les ad trestut neirs' (ll. 6191-6) *Gui de Warewic, Roman du XIIIe Siècle,* vol 2, edited by Alfred Ewert, Paris: Champion, 1933, p. 188. 'Gui went straight to Pavia; he dressed himself like a squire, stained his whole face with an ointment, and dyed his hair, which was in fact blond, completely black.' *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, p. 164.

[202] Crofts, Rouse, 'Middle English Popular Romance', p. 84.

4.4 The All-Encompassing Hero: *Guy of Warwick*

This survey of the Auchinleck romances set in England and / or featuring English heroes cannot but include *Guy of Warwick*. The eponymous hero somehow encompasses all the martial and courtly abilities outlined in the previous romances and raises them to the level of perfection. The circumstances surrounding the composition of the early thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman *Gui de Warewic* are still much debated. According to Dominica Legge, this romance might have been composed by the canons of Osney Abbey on the occasion of the union of the families of the earls of Warwick and d'Oilli.[203] The character of Guy of Warwick is certainly fictional, though it is believed to have been inspired by Wigod of Wallingford, Edward the Confessor's cupbearer. The marriage of one of Wigod's daughters with Robert d'Oilli provided the link between this family and the legendary hero. For the hero's deeds, the author might have resorted to the military career of the husband of another of Wigod's daughters, Brian Fizcourt.[204] Yet, the romance is not set during the realm of Edward the Confessor, but rather one century earlier, during that of King Æthelstan. Another competing explanation has been advanced regarding the origin of the name of the eponymous hero. According to R. M. Wilson, the fictional character might have derived from one of the kings of the West Angles, Warmundus, whose name is mentioned in the anonymous *Vitae Duorum Offarum*.[205] No final word has yet been said on the circumstances of this romance's first creation; however, Guy's inherent characteristics, as well as the exemplary nature of his life allowed for his early association with the very idea of Englishness. The family who shared the same name could not but take advantage of the increasing popularity of this legend. In order to reinforce their reputed connection with an illustrious English ancestor, the Beauchamp family also claimed to possess some of his relics. In 1369, Thomas, Earl of Warwick, left to his son the hero's sword and coat of mail.[206]

[203] Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background,* p. 162.
[204] Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background,* p. 162.
[205] R. M. Wilson, *The Lost Literature of England*, London: Methuen, 1972, p. 9.
[206] Wilson, *The Lost Literature of England*, p. 120.

Although the romance setting does not correspond to the realm of the historical Anglo-Saxon King Æthelstan, its pretence of historicity gives a prominent family of Norman origin the opportunity to legitimise their possessions in England by tracing their lineage back to pre-conquest past.[207] The first generation of Anglo-Norman nobility in fact secured their positions by marriage with the ancient Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. In this light, Guy's union with Felice cannot but function as a means to sanction the Norman practice of acquiring titles and properties through marriages.[208] The Auchinleck *Guy of Warwick* being placed after *The Battle Abbey Roll* could provide an additional interpretative key: this poem should be read as a historical as well as a family romance. By celebrating the deeds of an illustrious ancestor, it in fact succeeds in enhancing the prestige of a family for future generations.[209]

The Middle English text appears to be a close translation of the thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman *Gui de Warewic*, although several interpolations can be detected.[210] Significantly, the Anglo-Norman text only survives in English manuscripts,[211] thus possibly revealing an intimate relationship with insular culture from its very conception. Furthermore, the complicated and yet unentangled relationship between the extant Anglo-Norman and Middle English versions might offer a glimpse of what has been lost.[212] In spite of having initially been composed in the vernacular of a restricted élite, *Guy of Warwick* became in fact one of the most popular romances of the whole English Middle Ages.[213] The Anglo-Norman poet appears to have drawn so extensively on both continental and insular traditions that the reconstruction of the network of its sources proves a daunting task.[214] By

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[207] A historical example of this phenomenon can be detected in the marriage of the niece of the Anglo-Saxon king Edgar Ætheling, Matilda of Scotland, with Henry I, thus essentially unifying the house of Wessex with the new Norman aristocracy. Robert Rouse, 'Chronicle and Romance', p. 392.

[208] Rouse, 'Chronicle and Romance', p. 392.

[209] Rouse, 'Chronicle and Romance', p. 398.

[210] Ivana Djordjević, 'Guy of Warwick as a Translation', in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, edited by Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007, p. 27.

[211] Marianne Ailes, 'Gui de Warewic in its Manuscript Context', in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, edited by Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007, p. 21.

[212] Djordjević, 'Guy of Warwick as a Translation', p. 29.

[213] Rosalind Field, 'From *Gui* to *Guy*: The Fashioning of a Popular Romance' in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, edited by Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007, p. 44.

[214] Velma Bourgeois Richmond devotes an entire chapter of her monography *The Legend of Guy of Warwick* to the romance's antecedents, which include the Battle of Brunanburh (for the struggle between Guy and the giant Colbrond), the Life of Saint Alexis (for his renunciation of married life), William the Marshal (for his role as loyal supporter of his

taking on all the characteristics of the greatest heroes, Guy of Warwick comes to embody both the martial and the courtly characteristics of the perfect *miles Christi*.

The Middle English version of *Guy of Warwick* survives in five manuscripts and in three different redactions. The a-version can be found not only in the Auchinleck Manuscript, but also in two additional *codices*: the fifteenth-century Cambridge, Caius Cambridge MS 107/176 and the mid-late fourteenth century London, British Library, Sloane MS 1044, containing a 216-line fragment. Another fragmentary early fourteenth-century couplet redaction has been detected in the bindings of Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales 578 and London, British Library, Additional MS 14408. A later fifteenth-century couplet redaction is also contained in Cambridge, Cambridge University Library MS Ff.2.38. The Auchinleck redaction appears to have drawn on both the surviving Anglo-Norman versions as contained in London, British Library MS Additional 38662 and in Cambridge, Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 50.[215]

The Auchinleck version of *Guy of Warwick* is divided into three well distinguished sections: the first, in couplets, reporting Guy's falling in love with Felice and his deeds to conquer her heart, the second, in stanzas, narrating Guy's religious epiphany and consequent exploits for the love of God and the third, still in stanzas, providing an account of the adventures of Guy's son, Reinbroun. Significantly, this structure is unique to the Auchinleck Manuscript, since in the Anglo-Norman original Reinbroun's adventures are scattered throughout the second part of Guy's life and continue well after his death, thus essentially offering a reassuring afterlife for England's greatest hero. The Caius Cambridge redactor conversely decided to present a self-concluded version of Guy's story by omitting that of his son. Reinbroun's conception is in fact briefly mentioned at the beginning of the second part, whereas all his deeds are absent throughout. It is impossible to determine whether the

king and country), William of Orange (for his martial skills and role as champion of Christianity), as well as the romances by Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec et Énide, Cligès, Perceval* and *Yvain ou le Chevalier au Lion* (for several romance *topoi* ranging from the fight between a lion and a dragon, to the arming of the hero, or even to the forgetting of the beloved lady). Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*, pp. 7-36.

[215] Maldwyn Mills, 'Techniques of Translation in the Middle English Version of Guy of Warwick', in *The Medieval Translator*, vol 2, edited by Roger Ellis, Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991, pp. 209-11.

Auchinleck textual arrangement was already in its source text; however, the few references to Reinbroun's adventures still scattered throughout the second section make the narration at times confusing. For instance, in both Anglo-Norman versions, the narration of Reinbroun's early years is introduced at the same time as the second episode involving Tirri – roughly corresponding to line 8616 in the Auchinleck version. The Auchinleck redactor appears to have merely removed this section in order to recombine it with the other instances of Reinbroun's story in a separate romance entirely devoted to him. Nevertheless, a mere 150 lines later, Tirri refers that he could find neither Guy nor his mentor and friend Herhaud, as the latter has left to rescue Reinbroun. Guy's young son has in fact been kidnapped by Saracen merchants.[216]

> No sir Herhaud fond y nouȝt tare;
> To seche Gyes sone he is fare
> Þat was stollen wiþ striue. (ll. 8766-8)

However, at this stage of the story, the audience knows nothing about Reinbroun except that he had been conceived shortly after his parents' marriage and that his instruction has been entrusted to Herhaud. Therefore, one might wonder how and why he happened to be taken by the Saracens. A similar account of Reinbroun's misadventures can also be detected before the final combat between Guy and the giant Colbrond.

> To seche Gyes sone he [Heahaud] is fare
> Þat marchaunce hadde stollen þare,
> For him he was vnbliþe. (ll. 9759-61)

Although the recombination of Reinbroun's story in a single romance has somehow been performed unskilfully, it entirely succeeds in downplaying the original reassuring effect entailing an idea of continuity from one generation of England's champions to the next.[217] Furthermore, the separation of the two texts might have also been prompted by this redactor's awareness of their different tones. *Reinbroun* seems in fact closer to romance than to *chanson de geste*, as the eponymous hero's major feat is the rescue of his father's friend Amis of Monteyne from the castle of a fairy knight.

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[216] Saracen merchants' stealing the baby hero might be considered more of a *topos* than of an intertextual reference to *Beues of Hamtoun*.
[217] Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*, p. 47.

In the Auchinleck Manuscript, Guy's *vita* is properly concluded with additional twelve lines summarising the hero's achievements and emphasising their exemplary nature.[218]

> Now haue ȝe herd lordinges of Gij
> Þat in his time was so hardi
> & holden hende & fre,
> & euer he loued treuþe & riȝt
> & serued God wiþ al his miȝt
> Þat sit in trinite.
> & þerfore at his ending-day
> He went to þe ioie þat lasteþ ay
> & euer more schal be.
> Now God leue ous to liue so
> Þat we may þat ioie com to
> *Amen par charite*. (ll. 10500-11)

Like any independent romance, *Reinbroun* has a proper prologue followed by a summary of Guy's deeds, thus essentially implying that it could be read in isolation with little if any previous knowledge of the preceding poem. After all, the story of Guy of Warwick was already so popular that the audience of the Auchinleck Manuscript likely knew it well.

> His fader Gij þat him get,
> He was a werrour swiþe gret;
> Þar nas nowhar his per
> In Fraunce, in Pycardy,
> In Spayne, in Lombardy,
> Neyþer fer ne ner.
> Mani batayle he began
> For þe loue of o wimman
> Þat was him lef & dere.
> Siþe Rey[n]broun on hire he wan
> Þat was a swiþe douȝti man,
> Ase ȝe may forþward here. (ll. 13-24)

Yet, nothing is said about Guy's religious epiphany, as though it were somehow inconsistent with the general tone pervading Reinbroun's story. The account of Guy's deeds for the love of Felice being directly connected with those performed by his son allows for a similar romance atmosphere to be maintained throughout.

The second part of *Guy of Warwick* as well as *Reinbroun* are written in 12-line tail-rhyme stanzas with an unstable rhyming scheme. This shift from couplets to stanzas might also mark a change in tone: the second part appears more sustained and lyrical than the first.[219] In both cases, the metrical

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[218] *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*, edited by Julius Zupitza, EETS ES 42, 49, 59, London: Oxford University Press, 1883-91, p. 629.
[219] Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*, p. 56.

pattern is pre-eminently aabccbddbeeb, whereas the first 52 stanzas of *Guy of Warwick* as well as 18 stanzas from *Reinbroun* present the asymmetrical rhyming scheme aabaabccbddb. In *Guy of Warwick,* this more complicated metrical pattern seems to have been abandoned some six hundred lines well into the second part of the romance in favour of the symmetrical version of the 12-line tail-rhyme stanza.[220] The change from couplets to tail-rhyme stanzas might have originated in practical reasons, such as the availability of the new material, as well as in the awareness of the inherent nature of the second part of the poem.[221] It might thus have been 'deliberately made, deliberately placed' in order to emphasise the different stages of Guy's life as well as the narrative patterns characterising his story.[222]

Guy, the son of the Earl of Warwick's steward, openly declares his love for the earl's daughter, Felice. The beautiful maiden rejects him on the grounds of his inferior birth. Guy succeeds in being knighted by the earl, but for Felice this is not enough to win her heart: knighthood is a mere hollow title if it is not nourished by deeds of honour. He thus leaves for the continent in order to gain renown in the most famous tournaments. Since he proves his martial skills by winning them all, he returns to Warwick to claim Felice's hand. She is certainly impressed by his achievements, but they are still not enough to comply with her standards: in order to marry her, Guy should become the most renowned knight in the world. He thus needs to set his eyes on much bigger prizes. Guy proves his worth as the defender of justice and Christian faith, by taking the side of wronged knights as well as fighting against the pagans. He first negotiates a reconciliation between Duke Segyn and the Emperor of Germany. He then travels to Constantinople in order to rescue the emperor's realm from a Saracen army. On his way back, he takes again the side of the knights who have suffered the abuse of those in power and fights to save Tirri and his lover, Oisel. His return to England is marked by an additional fight to rescue his country from a fierce dragon. The longed-for marriage at last takes place. Guy and Felice immediately conceive a child. The celebrations are hardly over when Guy experiences a

[220] Mills, 'Techniques of Translation', pp. 215-6.
[221] Julie Burton, 'Narrative Patterning and Guy of Warwick', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 1 (1992), pp. 106-7.
[222] Burton, 'Narrative Patterning and Guy of Warwick', p. 108.

moment of revelation: he realises that his life has been sinfully spent in search of personal renown and resolves to spend the rest of it by anonymously fighting for the love of God alone. Guy first visits the Holy Land, where he agrees to fight against the giant Amoraunt in order to have all the Christian prisoners freed. He then travels to Germany and rescues his friend Tirri once again. Guy finally returns to England where he fights as his country's champion against the giant Colbrond. He refuses any recompense for having saved his homeland and travels to Warwick. He briefly stops at Warwick castle disguised as a poor pilgrim, only to conclude his journey at a hermitage nearby. As soon as he is informed by an angel of his imminent death, he reveals his presence to Felice. She arrives just in time to be re-united with her husband before his death. She dies of grief shortly afterwards. Their lifelong friend, Tirri, is allowed to take their bodies to Lorraine and give them proper burial in a magnificent abbey.

Although the action is triggered by Guy's love for Felice, the 12,033 lines characterising the three parts of the eponymous hero's story can hardly be classified as courtly romance *tout court*, as they are dominated by martial skills at least as much as by courtly love. According to Julie Burton, the structure of the first part of the romance seems to comply with that outlined by Vladimir Propp for any fairy-tale: 'a destabilising factor is introduced into a state of equilibrium'. This complication triggers the unfolding of the narrative, which proceeds through several states of disequilibrium until a new equilibrium is established in the customary happy ending.[223] The second part of *Guy of Warwick* is characterised by a different narrative pattern in which characters, events, locations are all arranged in groups of three. This phenomenon, also known as 'trebling', is common in folk tales as well as in certain fairy tales. The last item in the triads is generally conceived as the most important.[224] In this light, the Auchinleck *Guy of Warwick* can be considered as the combination of two fairy tales both ending happily with the union of Guy and Felice first in this world, then in heaven.[225] The

[223] Burton, 'Narrative Patterning and Guy of Warwick', p. 109; Vladimir Propp, *Morfologia della Fiaba* (Morfologija Skazki), translated by Salvatore Arcella, Rome: Newton Compton, 1977, pp. 32-71.
[224] Burton, 'Narrative Patterning and Guy of Warwick', p. 109.
[225] Burton, 'Narrative Patterning and Guy of Warwick', p. 110.

removal of the *Reinbroun* material would allow the romance to maintain a perfect symmetry between the two parts.[226] Nevertheless, the change in metre does not occur after Guy's marriage, but rather before, at the moment in which he leaves Æthelstan's court after having triumphed over the fierce dragon. A close analysis of *Guy of Warwick*'s narrative patterns reveals that the complication that disturbs the initial state of equilibrium is in the first half Guy's falling in love with Felice, in the second his repentance for his previous sinful conduct. Therefore, Guy's marriage would work as some sort of watershed: it represents the happy ending of the first part of the hero's adventures and the initial situation of the second.[227] Its being positioned after the change in metre would draw the audience's attention on its pivotal role.[228] Yet, one might argue that the 'happy-ever-after marriage' might not correspond to the culmination of a knight's career; it might rather be a mere additional complication that triggers further chivalric action. His role as a country saviour might conversely correspond to his most important achievement in both the first and the second parts. This hypothesis might find support in a line unique to the Auchinleck Manuscript. Shortly after having slain the dragon, he reaches his home at Wallingford and obtains Felice's as well as her father's approval for the marriage. At the very moment in which Guy seems to have obtained everything he had wished for the Auchinleck redactor hails him as 'Gij þe conquerour' (l. 7046). In the context of the Auchinleck Manuscript as a whole, the epithet 'conquerour' is uniquely reserved to the greatest kings in history: Charlemagne, King Richard, King Hengist, and King Arthur.[229] However, at this stage of the story Guy has hardly conquered any lands. He has renounced the possibility to become the new emperor of Constantinople by marriage with the Byzantine princess. Upon his father's death, he has entrusted Herhaud with all his estates, thus essentially forfeiting his lawful inheritance. He has received no recompense for having freed his country from the fearsome dragon. His other adventures almost amount to private feuds. Therefore, one might wonder why the Auchinleck redactor was

[226] Burton, 'Narrative Patterning and Guy of Warwick', p. 110.
[227] Burton, 'Narrative Patterning and Guy of Warwick', p. 111.
[228] Burton, 'Narrative Patterning and Guy of Warwick', p. 112.
[229] See Chapter 3.2.

willing to use such an epithet for the pre-redemption Guy. One explanation might lie in Guy's being depicted as the embodiment of the true *miles Christi*. The word 'conquerour' might mark the culmination of any king's and knight's earthly accomplishments; nevertheless, Guy is destined to achieve more: his life will be consigned to legend, his soul to heaven.

Guy of Warwick has always been listed amongst the romances belonging to the 'Matter of England'; however, its narrative structure appears to diverge significantly from that of most of the other poems. The exile-and-return pattern outlined in the previously examined romances does not really describe Guy's story, as his exile is voluntary and his return not led by dynastic reasons.[230] Furthermore, according to Rosalind Field, although the motivations that prompted Guy in the second part are admittedly different, as he is not fighting for the love of Felice any longer, but for God's alone, the outcome has not changed accordingly: Guy's story would thus be 'a lengthy accumulation of sensational episodes with an implication of deeper significance that lends some gravitas to the whole'.[231] It might be worth considering that since renown played such a pivotal role in shaping the knightly identity, the desire for secrecy of 'Gij þe gode kniȝt' certainly triggers a new phase in the narrative. According to Robert Rouse, Guy's new identity as martial-pilgrim does not necessarily replace his older self, but rather complements it, thus essentially allowing him to get a deeper understanding of the true essence of chivalry.[232] Yet, this redactor seems to undermine even this further attempt to find a coherent explanation of this romance's narrative choices: Guy does not entirely fulfil his vow of anonymity. After having defeated the fearsome adversaries, Guy always discloses his identity to the one person who asked for his assistance. His renown could certainly not be increased during his lifetime, as Earl Jonas, Tirri and Æthelstan are all vowed to secrecy; however, since they are aware of Guy's deeds, they can arrange for them to be remembered after his death. Guy's life can thus be turned into legend.

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[230] Field, 'From Gui to Guy', p. 47.
[231] Field, 'From Gui to Guy', p. 47.
[232] Robert Rouse, 'An Exemplary Life: Guy of Warwick as Medieval Culture-Hero' in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, edited by Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007, p. 104.

4.5 *Guy of Warwick*: Narrative *Topoi* and Strategies

Just like the other romances classified as 'Matter of England', 'ancestral romances', 'insular romances' or 'historical romances', *Guy of Warwick* is characterised by a marked preference for martial prowess and heroic deeds. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that several features typical of *chansons de geste* can be detected throughout the narrative. Fights are pre-eminently described as single combats, even when collective battles take place. Christian knights – as well as their opponents – are also given a name in order to make the account more vivid and to instil feelings of empathy in the audience. 'Dan Tebaud' (l. 2628), 'a Freyns kniȝt' from 'Bleyues' (ll. 2630-1), 'dan Guinman' from 'Aleman' (ll. 2634-5) as well as 'Dan Gauter' and 'Gilmin his felawe' (ll. 2638-9) all lost their lives in the heat of the battle. Since the fictional fight for Constantinople is transformed into a crusading rescue of one of the Christian strongholds in the East, the tone of the narrative cannot but change accordingly.

The frequent interventions of the narrator can mainly be classified as customary hyperboles aimed at emphasising the inadequacy of language in such a context, 'Wharto schuld ich ȝou telle more?' (l. 3212); 'What schuld y make tale muche?' (l. 3238), 'Þat ich ne can þe noumbre telle | Noiþer in rime no in spelle' (ll. 3254-5), 'Wharto schuld ich tale telle?' (l. 3270). Epic similes establishing a connection between Guy of Warwick and the king of all animals, the lion, are used to convey the whole extent of Guy's strength, resolution and knightly status, 'Aiþer semed a lyoun of mode | So hard þai smiten wiþ swordes gode.' (ll. 2030-1), 'Gij of Warwike his name it is, | Sterner þan eni lyoun, ywis.' (ll. 2772-3), 'he mett wiþ hem als a lyoun' (l. 4714). Some of the crusading *topoi* already explored in *Roland and Vernagu* and *Otuel a Knight* can also be detected in *Guy of Warwick*. For instance, the death of any Saracen opponent at the hands of Christian knights is described in gruesome detail. The stark contrast between the Christian hero and the Saracen villain in terms of faith is repeatedly emphasised. After the defeat of his Saracen champion, the Sultan almost customarily curses his gods for having failed him. Guy of Warwick's gratefulness for God's making him victorious can also be considered almost a cliché.

'Godenes in ȝou nas neuer yfounde
No more miȝt þan in an hounde.'
Bi þe fet he hem out drouȝ
& dede hem schame riȝt anouȝ.
Gij dede clepe her cheueteyn
Wiþ gode wille & hert feyn.
'Lordinges' he seyd 'God yþonked be,
Feir grace so habbe we
Þat þe Sarraȝins ben ouercome.
Wende we to þe cite atte frome.' (ll. 3356-65)

Other features of epic poetry can be detected at the very beginning of Guy's adventures, shortly after his second departure to seek glory through continental tournaments. Guy's prowess has aroused the envy of the powerful Duke Otun of Pavia. Therefore, Duke Otun cowardly decides to take advantage of Guy's being severely wounded in combat in order to get rid of him. Duke Otun thus sets up to ambush Guy and his companions in the 'forest of Pleyns' (l. 1108). Guy harangues his companions in the most heroic terms and urges them to sell their lives dearly, 'Dere we schul our deþ selle' (l. 1146). He further demonstrates the extent of his knightly virtues by renouncing the opportunity to flee for his life and fighting instead, alongside his companions. His proud answer is but another epic cliché.

'Þan answerd Gij anonriȝt
As gode kniȝt & ful of miȝt,
ȝif ȝe dye jchil also;
Nil ich neuer fram ȝou go.' (ll. 1159-62)

Nevertheless, courage is not enough. Outnumbered and taken by surprise they all perish in the defence of their honour. Only Guy survives, but his triumph is overshadowed by his extreme grief. Guy's first feat outside the tournament arena ends in a lament for the dead friends.

'Allas' quod Gij 'felawes dere,
So wele doand kniȝtes ȝe were.
Al to iuel it fel to me
Felice þo y was sent to serue þe;
For þi loue Felice, þe feir may,
Þe flour of kniȝtes is sleyn þis day.
Ac for þou art a wiman
Y no can nouȝt blame þe for þan,
For þe last no worþ y nouȝt
Þat wimen han to gronde ybrouȝt,
Ac alle oþer may bi me,
ȝif þai wil, ywarned be.
Allas, Herhaud, mi dere frende
What þou were curteys & hende.
Who schal me now help in fiȝt?
Neuer no was no better kniȝt.
In ich fiȝt wele halp þou me,

Ful iuel ichaue yȝolden it þe.
For me þou hast þi liif forgon,
Of þe no tit me neuer help non.
Hou mai ich now fram þe wende
Þat y no mai dye þe hende?' (ll. 1359-80)

This passage seems reminiscent of Roland's elegy for the death of his fellow paladins. At the sight of the bloody battlefield of Roncevaux, Roland finally realises the whole extent of the tragedy that has befallen on the Christian army. Turpin the warlike archbishop himself lies dead on the ground. Roland is overcome by grief and sadly laments his tragic fate.

Li quens Rollant veit l'arcevesque a tere:
[…]
Forment le pleignet a la lei de sa tere:
'E! gentilz hom, chevaler de bon aire,
Hoi te cumant al Glorius celeste.
Jamais n'ert hume plus volenters le serve.
Dès les apostles ne fut hom tel prophete
Pur lei tenir e pur humes atraire.
Ja la vostre anme nen ait sufraite!
De pareïs li seit la porte uverte!' (ll. 2246-58)[233]

Yet, in *Guy of Warwick*, the customary expression of grief for the death of one's fellow soldiers is transformed into the painful realisation of the groundlessness of one's cause. Roland might well have acted out of pride in order to gain further renown in the greatest deed of all, but he was still fighting to defend Christendom from pagan enemies. Guy's reasons are all but disinterested. His love for Felice has in fact triggered the chain of events that ultimately led to the death of many brave knights. In Guy's views, Felice is not to blame as she is a woman and women always lead men to harm.[234] He himself should be held responsible for his friends' death. The seeds of Guy's repentance for his sinful conduct thus appear to have already been sown. Significantly, when questioned about his identity before the fight against the giant Armorant, Guy replies that he serves the one Lord, whose allegiance can never bring dishonour.

'Nay, sir, for God' quaþ Gij
'A wel gode lord þan serue y.
Wiþ him was no blame.
Wel michel honour he me dede
& gret worþschipe in eueri stede

[233] *La Chanson de Roland*, p. 172. 'Count Roland sees the archbishop lie there […] he laments him in the Frankish way: | "Ah, noble man, knight of high lineage, | To God above I commend you this day. | No man will ever serve Him with more zeal; | Since the apostles no prophet has lived | Who won more men for the faith he maintained. | May your soul never lack for anything, | But find the gates of Paradise stand wide!"' *The Song of Roland*, p. 104.
[234] Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*, p. 58.

& sore ich haue him grame;
& þerfore icham þus ydiȝt
To cri him merci day & niȝt
Til we ben frendes same.
& mi lord & y frende be
Ichil wende hom to mi cuntre
& liue wiþ ioie & game.' (ll. 7932-43)

The emphasis on the word 'blame' cannot but accentuate the extent of Guy's new awareness of the motivations that should prompt chivalric deeds. Guy somehow seems to have begun his transformation from courtly knight to *miles Christi*.

The *Guy*-redactor also shows a great awareness on the nature of written sources. He reports to have drawn on 'spelle' for the first part, namely that reporting Guy's chivalric deeds to conquer Felice's heart and on 'geste' for the second, in which the same deeds are performed for the love of God alone. Just like in *Horn Childe*, in *Guy of Warwick* as well, a connection between content and medium is established: Guy's feats as a martial-pilgrim will be performed in 'gestes'.

Now herken & ȝe may here
In gest ȝif ȝe wil listen & lere
Hou Gij as pilgrim ȝede. (ll. 7440-2)

Although 'spelle' and 'geste' are part of the customary repertoire used to describe a text's sources, this redactor seems to uncover a meaningful distinction between the two.[235] In one of those epic hyperboles pervading the whole romance, he claims in fact to be able to report the number of the opponents, 'Noiþer in rime no in spelle' (ll. 3255), as though neither verse romances / *gestes* nor prose chronicles could convey the whole extent of the exceptionality of Guy's deeds. A sole instance of the word 'romance' can be detected in the opening of the second half of the stanzaic *Guy of Warwick*.

God graunt hem heuen-blis to mede
Þat herken to mi romaunce rede
Al of a gentil kniȝt (ll. 6923-6)

[235] *MED*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary [accessed on 15/01/2023]

This redactor recreates in a mere couplet the traditional situation of romance consumption so masterfully depicted in the illumination preceding Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 61 (fol. 1v): a performer reads the text aloud before a courtly audience.[236]

The first twelve-line tail-rhyme stanza opening the romance devoted to Guy of Warwick's son, Reinbroun, provides yet another instance of the reflection on the relationship between text and form of delivery:

> Ihesu þat ert of miȝte most,
> Fader & sone & holy gost,
> Ich bidde þe a bone,
> Ase þow ert lord of our ginning
> & madest heuene and alle þing,
> Se and sonne and mone,
> ȝeue hem grace wel to spede
> Þat herkneþ what y schel rede,
> Ihesu, God in trone.
> Of a kniȝt was to batayle boun,
> Sire Gij is sone þat hiȝte Rey[n]broun,
> Of him y make my mone. (ll. 1-12)

This redactor asks God to give those who are listening, 'hem […] Þat herkneþ', the grace to understand what he is about to read aloud, 'what y schel rede'. Significantly, the stanza ends on the word 'mone'. According to the *MED*, 'mone' means not only 'remembrance' and 'memory', but also 'mind' or 'intention', thus essentially implying that either this redactor is about to recollect Reinbroun's story from his memory or that he has the intention of engaging himself with this task.[237] In both cases, although the subsequent text is not directly classified as 'romaunce', 'geste' or 'spelle', it has undoubtedly been conceived for real or fictional oral delivery.

One last thought should be given to the sole spring setting present in *Guy of Warwick*. After the victory at Constantinople – and the subsequent adventures at the Byzantine court – Guy feels he has finally met Felice's requirements. He can thus return to England to claim her hand, 'Toward Jnglond is Gij ydrawe | & wiþ him Herhaud his gode felawe' (ll. 4123-4). Nothing is said about Guy's journey across the continent except that he reaches an unnamed forest in springtime.

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[236] 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 061: Geoffrey Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde', *Manuscripts in the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/dh967mz5785 [accessed on 15/01/2023]

[237] *MED*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary [accessed on 30/01/2023]

Swiþe hastiliche þai gun ride,
Þe weder was hot in somers tide.
In May it was also ich wene
When floures sprede & springeþ grene. (ll. 4125-8)

Although spring settings are typical of both romance and epic poetry, this passage seems specifically aimed at introducing the romantic sub-plot featuring the knight Tirri and his beloved Oisel. In the Anglo-Norman original, Guy's departure is followed by about twenty lined providing geographical details about his journey. After having crossed Germany and been welcomed by the German emperor in Spyre, he eventually reaches a region very familiar to him, Lorraine, 'Qu'en Loerenne est entré | a grant joie i est venu, | la terre e le pais ad conu' (ll. 4543-5).[238] In the Auchinleck version, the absence of any details makes this passage consistent with the usual vagueness of continental romances, thus essentially raising specific expectations in the audience. As soon as the romantic mode is adopted, the narrative is enriched with symbolic elements, such as the hawthorn under which Tirri lies between life and death.

Þiderward sir Gij him drouȝ
& loked vnder an haweþorn bouȝ.
Þe bodi he seye of a kniȝt,
Þerof he hadde wonder, apliȝt. (ll. 4155-8)

In medieval romances, the hawthorn appears to have been related to love allegory.[239] The introduction of specific romance *topoi* cannot but confirm this redactor's background knowledge of literary imagery.

Another extremely popular romance motif is the encounter of another character while hunting.[240] These encounters are usually associated with major changes in the hunter's life.[241] In *Guy of Warwick*, hunting scenes in fact serve the purpose of starting a new phase in the narration. Anne Rooney particularly focuses on the episode of the boar-hunt, which is positioned exactly in the middle of the romance, shortly before Guy's fight against the dragon. Significantly, the action takes place in

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[238] *Gui de Warewic*, vol 1, p. 138. 'He entered Lorainne, arriving there with great joy because he recognised the land and the country.' *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic: Two Anglo-Norman Romances,* translated by Judith Weiss, Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008, p. 146.
[239] Susan S. Eberly, 'A Thorn among the Lilies: The Hawthorn in Medieval Love Allegory', *Folklore*, 100 (1989), pp. 41-52.
[240] Anne Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993, p. 60.
[241] Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature,* p. 62.

Bretagne, a region traditionally associated with romance imagery. Just like Guy of Hamtoun and his son Beues, Guy of Warwick as well decides to pursue the wild boar alone, in spite of the risks involved. In the customary show-off of knightly prowess, Guy challenges the fierce beast on foot.

> When Gij þat stern swine ysey
> Adoun he lepe of his stede heye,
> Wiþ boþe honden þat swerd he held
> & cam to þe bore as a kniȝt beld. (ll. 6369-72)

He finally succeeds in slaying the boar; nevertheless, what should have represented the culmination of Guy's courtly skills suddenly turns sour: he deliberately kills Earl of Florentine's son for unjustifiable reasons and triggers further fight.[242]

> 'Wicke man, þou hast me smite.
> Þou schalt it abigge God it wite.'
> Wiþ his horn he him smot;
> His breyn he schadde fot-hot.
> 'Now lording', quaþ Gij 'þe swin þou nim
> & alle þi wille do wiþ him.
> Na more smite þou no kniȝt,
> Þat þou me smot þou dest vnriȝt.' (ll. 6421-8)

After murdering the earl's son, Guy wanders the forest with no idea of where he is. His physical disorientation cannot but reflect that of his soul. The claustrophobic forest stands for the shadow engulfing his own existence as a knight. Nevertheless, his moment of revelation has not come yet. At last, he reaches a castle where he asks for hospitality. Everyone is grieving for the unexpected death of the earl's son. Guy's fault is immediately uncovered and he is forced to fight for his life and leave the court as a dangerous criminal. Guy's knightly career has just disintegrated. The entire set of values Guy has always lived for is now put to question. In Rooney's words, 'The Guy-poet thus employs the conventional associations of the boar-hunt to raise his hero to the highest point of chivalric achievement before immediately turning the conventions against themselves in a masterly reassessment of the chivalric ethic.'[243] The second part of the romance cannot but be characterised by the disillusionment of the eponymous hero – as well as of the audience – regarding the definition of at least two of the very pillars upon which chivalry is based: 'bravery' and 'honour'. Since Guy of

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[242] Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature,* p. 80.
[243] Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature,* p. 81.

Warwick has come to embody the very idea of Englishness, these reflections might result into the identification of the distinctive features characterising the chivalric national hero.

4.6 Guy of Wariwck's Multifaced Identity

'Gij of Warwike' (ll. 765, 3578, 5643, 5909, 8415, 8571, 10206,) , 'Gij þe Cristen',[244] 'Gij þe conquerour' (l. 7045), 'Gij þe curteys' (l. 4119), 'Gij þe fre' (l. 2444), 'Gij þe gode kniȝt' (l. 3368), 'Gij þe englisse' (l. 3526) and finally 'Guy the Saint'[245] are all but manifestations of Guy of Warwick's multifaced identity. Like any fourteenth-century English lord, his identity is determined by his devotion to God, his knightly values as well as his attachment for a territory, which ranges from his personal estates to the whole of England. His allegiances will consequently rest with God, with his fellow knights, with his family, as well as with his king and country. Nevertheless, one might argue that these allegiances might at times be in conflict: the baronial wars had demonstrated all too well that the obligations of any 'Gij the Englisse' might amount even to the deposition of an anointed king for the major interest of the country. Therefore, as stressed by Croft and Rouse, baronial local interests might also be in conflict with the king's. If on the one hand king and nation are one and the same, on the other the king's body politic allows for the institution of kingship not only to outlive the king's earthly body, but also to be exempt from any deficiencies.[246] Since both kings and lords should serve the major interest of the nation, their views cannot be in conflict. Any strife is thus provoked by either of the two parts having placed their self-interests before that of the country. In this light, Edward II was not deposed because the interests of the barons were in conflict with those of the king, but rather because the king himself was incapable of defending England any longer, his treacherous advisors preventing him from pursuing the good of the nation. The wars against fellow Christians might have prompted romance redactors to stage adventures in which the enemy of any 'Gij þe

[244] 'Cristen icham' (l. 8236).

[245] As soon as Guy dies, his body is surrounded by a sweet smell, clearly denoting his holiness, 'A swete braþe com fram his bodi | Þat last þat day so long | Þat in þis world spices alle | No miȝt cast a swetter smalle | As þen was hem among.' (ll. 10447-51)

[246] Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016, pp. 7-23.

Cristen' is entirely other. Nevertheless, the creation of a dichotomic opposition good / evil in which the characters' features are easily recognisable does not seem to have resolved the complexity inherent in the definition of the national heroes' identity.[247] Instead of trying to resolve the complexity described before by outlining an unambiguous definition of Guy's identity, the *Guy*-author seems to have been willing to preserve it. Therefore, he might have staged each of Guy's deeds in order to set the spotlight on one of his multiple identities.

4.7 'Gij þe Cristen'

As a young knight in search of fame, Guy volunteers to rescue Constantinople. As stressed by Rouse, it is tempting to imagine Guy's exploits in terms of crusading ideals, especially in the light of the role played by this city in the historical Crusades.[248] Rebecca Wilcox has also argued that this episode 'is emblematic of a narrative that seeks to elide the historical memory of the conquest and sack of Constantinople by the Western crusaders during the Fourth Crusade'.[249] This hypothesis might find support in a rather flattering remark on the demeanour of the Byzantine Greeks at war, 'Þe Griffouns þat gode weren' (l. 2677). Interestingly, this appreciation of their military skills proves unique to the Auchinleck Manuscript and in stark contrast with what is reported of them in *King Richard*.[250] Yet, the reference to one Theobald, 'Dan Tebaud' (l. 2628), might provide further clues as to the historical circumstances that inspired this passage. Theobald I, Count of Champagne was one of the leaders of the Barons' Crusade and, as King of Navarre, the sole monarch who took part in it.[251] In 1235, Constantinople was besieged by the emperor of Nicaea who was simultaneously laying waste the Latin dominions on the Anatolian peninsula. He would have won the city itself, had it not been for

[247] Crofts, Rouse, 'Middle English Popular Romance', p. 83.
[248] Rouse, 'An Exemplary Life', pp. 98-9.
[249] Rouse, 'An Exemplary Life', p. 99.
[250] 'Cel jur se sunt mulz entre ocis, | mais as Sarazins estut le pis ; | kar Gui e ses compaignuns, | ensemble od lui ses Griffuns, | Desconfiz les unt et dechascez' (ll. 3099-103) *Gui de Warewic,* vol 1, p. 95. 'That day many killed one another, but the Saracens had the worst of it, for Gui and his companions, and his Greeks with him, defeated and drove them away.' *Boeve of Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, p. 130. This remark is also absent from the Caius version.
[251] Michael Lower, *The Barons' Crusade: A Call to Arms and Its Consequences*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005, p. 61

the miraculous rescue carried out by the emperor of the Latin Empire, John of Brienne, at the head of a mere 160 knights.[252] Shortly after having received John of Brienne's letter asking for support, the pope redirected the forces intended for the Holy Land to Constantinople.[253] Apart from the remark on the prowess of the Byzantine Greeks, this passage appears to be a faithful translation of the Anglo-Norman *Gui de Warewic*. Therefore, since the Anglo-Norman text appears to have been composed sometime between 1232 and 1242,[254] it might have been meant to evoke almost contemporary events. Conversely, in the context of the Auchinleck Manuscript, this reference to Theobald I might be consistent with the prominence given to the family of the Earls of Champagne not only in *King Richard*, but also in *The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*.[255]

Nevertheless, the motivations that prompted Guy to side with the emperor of Constantinople are admittedly more self-interested than altruistic. Guy's empathy at the Byzantine merchants' account of the hardship endured by the besieged citizens appears to be overcome by his desire for renown.

> Fram Costentine-þe-noble ycomen we be.
> Lond of peys þan seche we.
> Marchandes we ben of þat lond
> & out ydriuen wiþ michel wrong,
> Out of Coyne þe riche soudan (ll. 2460-4)

His mentor himself describes this enterprise as no different from any other chivalric deed except in that it will allow for Guy's reputation to be immensely increased. 'Herhaud answerd "y graunt it be | Miche worþschipe it worþ to þe"' (ll. 2504-5). Since courtly society appears to have been significantly concerned with fame, Guy's almost exclusive interest for his renown might come as no surprise at this stage of the story. However, his sudden awareness of his sinful conduct as well as his consequent repentance do not necessarily imply that the author of *Guy of Warwick* intended to reject any form of

[252] After the sack of Constantinople, in 1204, part of the Byzantine Empire remained in the hands of the leaders of the Fourth Crusade. The resulting Crusader state is currently known as the Latin Empire. David Jacoby, 'The Latin Empire of Constantinople and the Frankish States in Greece', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume 5, C.1198-c.1300*, edited by David Abulafia, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 525-42. Lower, *The Barons' Crusade,* pp. 58-9

[253] Lower, *The Barons' Crusade,* p. 59.

[254] Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background,* p. 162.

[255] See Chapters 2.3 and 3.3.

chivalry in favour of contemplative life, he might rather have argued for a kind of chivalry based on humility and on the true love of God.

Yet, Guy's first rescue of the Byzantine Empire merely paves the way for his second exploit as champion of the Christian faith. In the second half of the romance, Guy agrees to enter the entirely Saracen controversy between King Triamour and the Sultan in order to ensure the release of all Christian prisoners. The single combat originally intended to settle a private feud is thus transformed into a proper crusade. The Sultan in fact agrees that if Guy wins the day, he will not only release Jonas' sons as well as any other Christian prisoner, but he will also stop persecuting them and grant them safe passage to the Holy Land.

> Alle þe men þat in my prisoun be
> Þai schul be deliuerd for loue of þe
> Þat Cristen men be told.
> Fram henne to Ynde þat cite
> Quite-claym þai schul go fre
> Boþe ȝong & old.
> & so gode pes y schal festen anon
> Þat Cristen men schul comen & gon
> To her owhen wille in wold. (ll. 7968-76)

Just like Charlemagne and King Richard, 'Gij þe Cristen' is thus transformed into a figure for a crusader. His devotion to God represents his primary allegiance and the core of his identity.

The single combat between Guy of Warwick and the Saracen giant Amourant is depicted as a psychomachia in which the clash between virtue and vice, good and evil consigns the hero's deeds to everlasting glory. In some sort of literary *translatio studii*, the Auchinleck redactor describes the eponymous hero's fight in the light of the mythical Trojan war.

> Þe halle schon þerof as sonne of glas
> For soþe wiþouten fayle.
> His helme was of so michel miȝt
> Was neuer man ouercomen in fiȝt
> Þat hadde it on his ventayle.
> It was Alisaunders þe gret lording
> When he fauȝt wiþ Poreus þe king
> Þat hard him gan aseyle.
> A gode swerd he hadde wiþouten faile
> Þat was Ectors in Troye batayle,
> In gest as-so men fint. (ll. 8020-30)

The analogy with Hector allows Guy of Warwick to join the glorious company of the Nine Worthies.[256] Although in this text Guy of Warwick is not openly associated with the Nine Worthies, by the end of the sixteenth century, he appeared to have replaced Godfrey of Bouillon in the English triad of Christian rulers. In his 1584, *Briefe Discourse of the Most Renowned Actes and Right Valiant Conquests of Those Puissant Princes, Called the Nine Worthies*, Richard Lloyd has Guy of Warwick not only displace the first King of Jerusalem, but also outdo King Arthur himself in terms of moral rectitude.[257] Guy of Warwick and Charlemagne thus create some sort of subset of chivalric exemplarity in the Christian triad itself.

> Then Arthur, Charle-mayne and Guy, were christians as I gesse,
> The one was plagde in his most pompe, for his lasciuiousnesse:
> The other two were godly men, wherfore they dyed well,
> As in their seuerall Histories the Sequell plaine doth tell.[258]

However, the network of allusions raised by the Trojan War does not appear to be limited to the Nine Worthies, but rather extends to England's mythical founder, Brutus. This parallel cannot but be reinforced by Guy's acting as a giant slayer. The line of greatness connecting classical antiquity with tenth-century England is further reinforced by Guy's wearing the helmet of another member of the Nine Worthies, King Alexander. A few lines earlier, Guy is also reported to have been given the hauberk of one King Clarels.[259]

> Þe hauberk he hadde was Renis
> Þat was king Clarels, ywis,
> In Ierusalem when he was þare. (ll. 8007-9)

Since in the Anglo-Norman *Gui de Warewic*, the hauberk is reported to have belonged to Charlemagne, the original effect imagined by the redactor was probably to present a hero who could encompass all the heroic heritage represented by the Nine Worthies.[260] In the Middle English

[256] Admittedly, this is not the sole reference to one of the Nine Worthies, since Guy's struggle against a Saracen giant is certainly reminiscent of King David's fight against Goliath.
[257] Helen Cooper, 'Guy as Early Modern English Hero', in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, edited by Alison Wiggins and Rosalind Field, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007, p. 186.
[258] Richard Lloyd, *A Brief Discourse of the Most Renowned Actes and Right Valiant Conquests of those Puisant Princes, Called the Nine Worthies,* https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebogroup/ [accessed on 20/01/2023]
[259] This reference is absent from the Caius version. *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*, p. 453.
[260] 'Un halberc out qui ert faé | qui al rei Charles fu presenté, | Quant en Jerusalem esteit' (ll. 8389-11) *Gui de Warewic,* vol 2, p. 51. 'He had an enchanted hauberk, which had been given to King Charles when he was in Jerusalem', *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, p. 189.

translation the effect is somehow downplayed, as instead of wearing the armour of the greatest champion of Christianity, Guy is forced to wear that of one of the pagan kings presented in *Otuel a Knight*. According to Alison Wiggins, 'the replacement may suggest an interest in representing warriors from the East or it may represent a particular knowledge of *Otuel* on the part of the redactor or scribe'.[261] Nevertheless, given the prominence enjoyed by Charlemagne in the Auchinleck collection, it is impossible to exclude a mere scribal mistake.[262]

Significantly, great prominence is also given to the arming of the villain, whose equipment is equally imbued with mythical overtones. Amorant is in fact reported to wield Hercules' sword.[263]

> Sir Amoraunt drouȝ his gode brond
> Þat wele carf al þat it fond
> When he hadde lorn his launce.
> Þat neuer armour miȝt wiþstond
> Þat was made of smitþes hond
> In heþenesse no in Fraunce.
> It was sir Ercules þe strong
> Þat mani he slouȝ þerwiþ wiþ wrong
> In batayle & in destaunce.
> […]
> It was baþed in þe flom of helle,
> Agnes ȝaf it him to wille
> He schuld þe better spede. (ll. 8088-102)

The giant's weapon allegedly acquired portentous strength after having been dipped in the 'flom of Helle'. This detail might have been inferred from the account of the Labours of Hercules. In one of these episodes, Hercules receives a sword from Hermes himself, whereas, in another, he is forced to descend to Hell in order to abduct Cerberus.[264] Nevertheless, in Hercules' story as described by Apollodorus in his *Library*, no mention is made of a weapon made invincible by the water of the river of Hell. The reference to the infernal river might thus be reminiscent of the story of the invulnerability of another hero of the Trojan War, Achilles, who was in fact bathed by his mother Thetis in the river Styx in order to make him invincible.[265] This passage is not new to the Auchinleck Manuscript, but

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[261] *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, p. 139.
[262] Rouse, 'An Exemplary Life', p. 106.
[263] This reference can also be detected in the Caius version. The Romance of Guy of Warwick, p. 459.
[264] *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, note 83 p. 190. Apollodoro, *I Miti Greci: Biblioteca*, edited by Paolo Scarpi, translated by Maria Grazia Ciani, Milano: Mondadori, 1996, II.4.11, pp. 121-2 and 5.12, pp. 151-5.
[265] Allison Wiggins emphasises the extent to which this part of the Trojan legend was widespread across the Middle Ages. '*The Seege or Batayle of Troy* records how Achilles' mother "bathid his body in þe flom of helle" (line 1345) and, with the exception of his feet which remained tender, his body turned "blak as Mahoun | Fro þe foot to þe croun | And his skyn

rather a fairly close translation of the Anglo-Norman original. Yet, in the context of this collection, it appears to be imbued with political undertones. Amorant being a Saracen does not necessarily imply that this episode should be exclusively read in the light of a crusading enterprise, it might also be read in the light of political propaganda. Assuming that Britain was founded by Brutus and Scotland by Scota and her Greek husband Gaithelos, the clash between Hector and Achilles might be metaphorically perceived as the clash between neighbouring countries. Furthermore, as stressed in the previous chapter, the word 'Saracens' might simply stand for 'enemies'.

Amorant's description is certainly reminiscent of that of any Saracen villain from the *chansons de geste*. However, the Guy-author takes the opportunity to emphasise even further the opposition between the two characters by having the giant make an admiring remark on Guy's martial prowess. Guy's renown appears in fact to be widespread amongst his enemies as well. After the first skirmishes, the Saracen giant recognises the Christian champion and in epic fashion provides yet another epithet for him, 'þou were Gij þe strong' (l. 8246). In spite of his fighting against a pagan opponent, Guy shows the same courtesy as with any other knight and allows him to quench his thirst. However, Amorant is inherently wicked and incapable of keeping his word. He promises that he would have returned the same courtesy as soon as Guy was in need, but he has no honour. When he realises that he could only win by ruse, he denies Guy a drink of water. Amorant's strength is certainly superhuman; nevertheless, unlike Guy's, it cannot raise any admiration. It can merely be compared to that of a wild beast.

4.8 'Gij þe gode kniȝt'

Just like *Horn Childe* and *Beues of Hamtoun*, the extant opening lines of *Guy of Warwick* are devoted to the portrait of the eponymous hero's father. Although in the Auchinleck Manuscript the poem lacks

was as hard as flynt" (line 1350-52). The process by which Achilles' skin achieved its flint-like hardness is subsequently reiterated in *The Seege* as a preface to the scene in which Achilles kills Hector in hand-to-hand combat (lines 1461-66). The association of Guy with Hector (he carries Hector's sword, line 1105) and Amorant with Achilles (his sword having the strength of Achilles) gives the battle another dimension. Portrayed as the descendants of these heroic ancestors, their meeting is dramatized in terms of the famous battle between Hector and Achilles, Trojan and Greek.' *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, p. 140.

its first folio, it is possible to determine the exact extent of what has been lost. The booklet entirely devoted to the romance about Guy of Warwick and his son Reinbroun, Booklet 4, is made of 9 gatherings of 8 folios each. The surviving first folio (fol. 108) belongs to Gathering 17, from which a sole page appears to be missing. However, since the catchword on folio 107v clearly refers to the first line of the romance, 'here ginneth sir Gij', one must conclude that no other gatherings are missing, thus implying that up to 176 lines have been lost.[266] In his 1883 edition, Julius Zupitza supplies the missing lines with the Anglo-Norman version as in the thirteenth-century Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 50 and in the late thirteenth-century London, British Library, Harley MS 3775.[267] These redactions are characterised by a prologue in which the importance of education and the benefits deriving from the knowledge of the exemplary lives of brave knights are emphasised. Some twenty lines later, the first character of the romance is introduced: Rualt, Earl of Warwick. He is described as extremely wealthy and powerful, as well as esteemed throughout the kingdom. The earl's daughter Felice is conveniently beautiful and wise, as well as surprisingly gifted in astronomy, arithmetic and geometry. Unfortunately for Guy, Felice is also particularly proud and well aware of her high social status. The point in which Guy's family is finally mentioned corresponds to the beginning of the Auchinleck version. It is impossible to determine whether the Auchinleck redactor had translated this passage faithfully or added any remarks about the Warwick family, Guy deserving to be listed amongst the Nine Worthies, or even the opportunity to provide an English version of such

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[266] Since the layout chosen for the first part of *Guy of Warwick* consists of 2 columns of 44 lines each, one must infer that the number of lost lines might amount to 176. However, if the romance were preceded by an illumination, the missing part should be calculated in around 166 lines, as the average number of lines occupied by the extant illuminations as well as by those excised without removing the whole page amounts to 10 (this number has been calculated considering the illuminations preceding *The King of Tars, Seynt Mergrete, Seynt Katerine, þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi and þe Soule, The Nativity and Early Life of Mary, Sir Degare, Reinbroun, Of Arthour & of Merlin, þe Wenche þat Loved þe King, How Our Lady's Sauter was First Found, Lay le Freine, Otuel a Knight, The Thrush and the Nightingale, Dauid þe King, Sir Tristrem, Horn Childe & Maiden Rimnild, King Richard*).

[267] *Manuscripts in the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 050: Wace, Roman de Brut. Roman de Guy de Warewic', https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/sp968bx9690 [accessed on 15/01/2023]; *British Library, Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, 'Detailed record for Harley 3775', https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7378&CollID=8&NStart=3775 [accessed on 15/01/2023]; *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*, p. 2.

a remarkable hero's deeds; nevertheless, considering the extant prologues of the Auchinleck romances, all these possibilities are equally likely.

Unlike Horn and Beues, Guy is not of noble birth: he is the mere son of the Earl of Warwick's steward. Nevertheless, his father's bravery is in no way inferior to that of the greatest knights: he is ready to defend his lord's honour even at the cost of his life.

> His lordis honour he held worþschipliche
> & defended it wele & hardiliche;
> Þer was [no] kni[ȝ]t in Jnglonde
> Þat wiþ wretþe durst him at stonde. (ll. 9-12)

In spite of Guy's father certainly providing his son with a model of honour and loyalty to emulate, he is deliberately relegated to a marginal role in the narrative. Guy's renown is undoubtedly his own doing. Although Guy certainly possesses the same courtly and martial skills as any noble youth, he is a mere 'nori' (l. 158), one who is not entitled to the privileges of descendance. Admission to chivalry itself was generally reserved to those who could claim a noble ancestral line. Therefore, in order to be knighted at his request, Guy necessarily needs to live in a meritocratic society, in which martial achievements and physical beauty can compensate one's lack of lineage.[268] He thus embodies 'the dream of chivalry', a system in which heroes are not exclusively created by nature, but also by nurture.[269]

> Gentil he was & of michel miȝt
> Ouer al oþer feirest bi siȝt;
> Al þai wonderd strongliche
> For his feirhed was so miche (ll. 37-40)

Therefore, it might come as no surprise that Guy's education in both courtly and martial activities is particularly emphasised. His position as a favourite in the household of the Earl of Warwick gives him the opportunity to be properly instructed by a mentor, Herault of Ardern, in courtly pursuits as well. Nevertheless, the reference to Guy's instruction in falconry might somehow be conceived as yet another way to stress Guy's lack of status. In the Anglo-Norman original, the species mentioned range from common birds, 'oiseals', to the birds of prey, 'osturs' (goshawks), 'falcuns' (hawks) and

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[268] Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*, pp. 42-3.
[269] Field, 'From Gui to Guy', p. 46.

'girfalcs' (gyrfalcons).[270] The Middle English redactor merely retains two items from this list: 'hauk' and 'estriche faucouns'.[271] The emphasis on goshawks of 'grete mounde' and the consequent omission of 'gyrfalcons' might well have been driven by stylistic and metrical constraints; nevertheless, it is still somehow unexpected. 'Gyrfalcons' appear in fact to have been the highest esteemed birds of prey by the English kings.[272] Furthermore, in romances, it was certainly not the goshawk, but rather the sparrowhawk which was usually associated with the chivalric context.[273] Therefore, the Auchinleck redactor might have wanted to emphasise that although Guy received an education possibly unusual for his status, he is still the offspring of a mere steward and thus is not entitled to be trained like a noble youth.

> Gij a forster fader hadde
> Þat him lerd & him radde
> Of wodes & riuer & oþer game;
> Herhaud of Ardern was his name.
> He was hende & wele ytauȝt;
> Gij to lern forȝat he nauȝt.
> Michel he couþe of hauk & hounde
> Of estriche faucouns of gret mounde. (ll. 45-52)

However, although knighthood was the first condition set by Felice to win her heart, its achievement proves insufficient. Felice in fact outlines a subtle distinction between form and substance: Guy might well have been dubbed; nevertheless, he has not proved to be a real knight yet. Chivalry is but a hollow title if it is not nourished by deeds of honour.

> 'Gij' seyd Felice 'heye þe nouȝt.
> ȝete hastow no þing of armes ywrouȝt
> No artow þe better neuer-a-del
> Þan þou wer ere y say þe wel
> Bot on þatow [hast] newe dobing
> & art cleped kniȝt wiþouten lesing;
> Bot it be þurth þi miȝt
> Þou no miȝt chalang loue þurth riȝt.' (ll. 579-86)

[270] *Gui de Warewic*, vol 1, (ll. 151-2), p. 5.
[271] The list provided in the Caius MS is a close translation of the Anglo-Norman original. 'The Faukons of grete moundes' are undoubtedly the gyrfalcons, as they are the largest falcons of all. 'Of haukes and houndes, | of Ostours, of Faukons of grete moundes' (Caius MS, ll. 175-6). *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*, p. 13.
[272] Robin S. Oggins, *The Kings and Their Hawks: Falconry in Medieval England*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004, p. 12.
[273] Oggins, *The Kings and Their Hawks*, p. 16.

Felice's remark appears to be the driving force behind Guy's adventures. Therefore, it might come as no surprise that the first part of the romance is predominantly concerned with establishing the true meaning of 'deeds of honour' as well as the motivations that should prompt them. Felice's words will turn against her: Guy at last discovers that only the *miles Christi* can embody the true essence of chivalry.

Lost in the ecstatic contemplation of the celestial sphere, Guy questions his own chivalric identity. His previous deeds might well have earnt him earthly fame; nevertheless, in the light of what knighthood should represent, they were but sinful displays of human pride.

> 'Allas,' he seyd 'þat y was born,
> Bodi & soule icham forlorn,
> Of blis icham al bare
> For neuer in al mi liif biforn
> For him þat bar þe croun of þorn
> Gode dede dede y nare.
> Bot wer & wo ichaue don wrouȝt
> & mani a man to grounde ybrouȝt,
> Þat rewes me ful sare.
> To bote min sinnes ichil wende
> Barfot to mi liues ende
> To bid mi mete wiþ care.' (ll. 7176-87)

Guy's moment of revelation is imbued with religious undertones: the many valiant knights he pointlessly killed will hunt his conscience forever. He can only hope to save his soul by henceforth living as a humble pilgrim and offering his sword to God alone.

This transformation is not limited to chivalric deeds, but rather involves the definition of courtly love itself. *Guy of Warwick* initial romance setting cannot but be completed by the conventional description of Guy's torment and melancholic state, as though this redactor wanted to provide a portrait of the hero much closer to the pensive lovesick Lancelot than to the warlike Gawain.

> Vnto his chamber he went ful riȝt
> & wepe & made grete wo
> For he loued þat maiden so. (ll. 126-8)
>
> Þat he weneþ his liif forgon (l. 133)
>
> Now is Gij jn gret tempest,
> Sorwe he makeþ wiþ þe mest (ll. 139-40)
>
> Rest no take slepeinge,
> Mete ete no drinke dringe. (ll. 175-6)

A possible allusion to a Lancelot-like knight, whose deeds are solely driven by the love of a woman, would be deeply consequential in *Guy of Warwick*, as it would reinforce the perception of inadequacy if not even of sinfulness of Guy's first knightly career. In spite of his being a great knight, Lancelot in fact fails the Grail Quest, as his adulterous love for Guinevere makes him unsuitable for the greatest task of all. Lancelot's son Galahad is the knight predestined to achieve the Grail. His cleanness and chastity possibly make him the very embodiment of the purest form of chivalry. Guy will also aim at a higher form of chivalry throughout the second part of his life; nevertheless, he will do so in the English way. The Plantagenets appears in fact to have secularized chivalry, by disseminating legends – such as those related to King Arthur – promoting a model of ruling by conquest, whereas the Capetians retained its sacral order. In Braswell's word, in Plantagenet England, 'service to the king replaced any service to the Grail'.[274]

However, Guy's condition does not appear to be exclusively reminiscent of a specific romance or hero, but rather consistent with those traditionally associated with lovesickness. This condition – also known as *aegritudo amoris* – has been part of the scientific-literary tradition since the 5th century BC.[275] Its symptoms included asthenia, pallor, insomnia, fevers, repeated episodes of lipothymia and syncope or even lunacy that could be triggered by the black bile invading the brain.[276] Lovesickness was essentially explained in terms of humoral imbalance. In order to restore the patients' mental health several remedies were suggested, though the company of the very object of such an obsessive love was at times considered the only viable solution to save their lives. Although the description of specific symptoms certainly derived from scientific treatises, by the later Middle Ages it was considered almost a cliché. However, this movement of scientific material into literature does not appear to have been unidirectional: medical material enriched the repertoire of literary *topoi* as much as literary *topoi* provided further medical knowledge for scientific treatises.[277] Therefore, the *Guy*-

[274] Braswell, 'The Search for the Holy Grail', p. 486.
[275] Massimo Ciavolella, *La Malattia d'Amore dall'Antichità al Medioevo*, Roma: Bulzoni, 1976, p. 131.
[276] Ciavolella, *La Malattia d'Amore dall'Antichità al Medioevo*, pp. 105-6; 111.
[277] Ciavolella, *La Malattia d'Amore dall'Antichità al Medioevo*, p. 136.

poet's extensive drawing on the rich tradition of *aegritudo amoris* would reinforce the idea that he possessed a detailed knowledge of romance *topoi* and literary conventions.

Yet, after his religious epiphany, he does not merely leave his wife behind, but rather involves her in his project of redemption. Just as his knightly identity is transformed into that of a *miles Christi*, so his love for Felice is sublimated into Christian *caritas*. He prays that God might grant her half the benefit of all the deeds he will be able to accomplish.

> 'Of alle þe dedes y may do wel
> God grant þe, lef, þat haluendel
> & Marie his moder swete.' (ll. 7233-5)

Guy's extreme act of love and courtesy seals his ultimate transformation. His journey is one-way. He will never return, except at the very last moment in order to re-join his beloved wife in the bliss of heaven.

One last thought should be given to yet another of Guy's chivalric allegiances: that for his fellow knights. In *Guy of Warwick*'s tripartite structure, the second couple of episodes is thus entirely devoted to Guy's rescuing his friend Tirri. In the first of these instances of chivalric assistance, Guy takes the side of a badly wounded Tirri and succeeds in avenging him and his beloved Oisel. Given the extent of the assistance provided and the risks involved, the two decide to become sworn brothers.

> On a day as þai com fram hunting
> Gij seyd to Tirry wiþouten lesing
> 'Ich wil þat we be treuþe-pliȝt
> & sworn breþer anonriȝt,
> Tirri' seyd (to) sir Gyoun.
> 'Vnderstond now to mi resoun
> Þat noiþer oþer after þis
> No faile oþer while he liues is.'
> Wiþ þat answerd þerl Tirri
> & seyd 'wel bleþelich, sir Gij,
> Now þou louest so miche me
> Þat tow mi sworn broþer wil be
> No wille ich neuer feyle þe
> For nouȝt þat mai bifalle me. (ll. 4525-38)

The practice of sworn brotherhood appears to have been particularly widespread in the Middle Ages and thus extremely popular in romance and *chansons de geste* as well. Nevertheless, it did not merely bind two (or more) male aristocrats to offer each other life-long assistance, but rather entailed several legal and moral obligations ranging from fighting alongside the other, sharing one's possessions,

fighting duels on the other's behalf or even avenging the other's death.[278] As stressed by Robert Stretter, sworn brotherhood was 'the most highly formalised mode of male friendship in the Middle Ages'.[279] Therefore, it comes as no surprise that it was sealed by written documents or verbal oaths often accompanied by formal ritualistic elements, such as swearing on a Bible or exchanging a kiss.[280] Although the Auchinleck version seems a fairly close translation of the Anglo-Norman original, the lexical choice might equally convey a greater interest for legal matters. The Anglo-Norman text reports that Guy and Tirri agree to be companions from then on, 'desore serruns compaignuns' (l. 5046).[281] However, the semantic field wherein this specific type of agreement is grounded does not seem to be that of fellowship, but rather of brotherhood, thus possibly implying that the Auchinleck redactor might have wanted to make this passage consistent with the legal preoccupations pervading the whole collection. In both chronicles and legal documents, the two covenants were in fact referred to as brothers (fratres) 'adjurati' (sworn), 'federati' (allied), or 'adoptivi' (adoptive), whereas a contemporary witness wrote that Edward II addressed his favourite Pierre Gaveston as 'nostre cher frere et feal' (our dear brother and vassal).[282] According to Stretter, sworn relationships created a 'system of male obligations' publicly displaying male loyalty. Since this type of union entailed the idea of loyalty between men, it could not but reinforce the feudal hierarchy, in which one's primary allegiance was to another man, his lord.[283]

4.9 'Gij þe englisse'

Guy's English identity finds its greatest expression in the third pair of his chivalric exploits, both set in England and both related to the rescue of his country from an enemy threatening its very existence. Yet, Guy's bonds with his homeland have been presented as foundational in the definition of his

[278] Robert Stretter, 'Engendering Obligation: Sworn Brotherhood and Love Rivalry in Medieval English Romance' in *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse*, edited by Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010, p. 505.
[279] Stretter, 'Engendering Obligation', p. 501.
[280] Stretter, 'Engendering Obligation', pp. 503; 505.
[281] *Gui de Warewic*, vol 1, pp. 153-4.
[282] Elizabeth A. R. Brown, 'Ritual Brotherhood in Western Medieval Europe', *Traditio*, 52 (1997), pp. 359-60.
[283] Stretter, 'Engendering Obligation', p. 506.

Englishness throughout the romance. When questioned about his identity, Guy always provides his name as well as his birthplace, as though it were a key factor in determining one's identity. Significantly, unlike Beues of Hamtoun, Guy's toponymic surname does not derive from his feudal holdings, but rather from his birthplace in Warwickshire. Although the Anglo-Norman source resorts to an entire set of words, such as 'Engleterre', 'terre', 'pais', to describe Guy's provenance, the Middle English translator seems to collapse them in a sole noun: 'cuntre'.

> 'Gij of Warwike men clepeþ me.
> Ich was yborn in þat cuntre.' (ll. 765-6)
>
> Gui de Warewic sui apelez,
> En Engleterre la fui nez. (ll. 871-2)[284]
>
> 'Gij of Warwike mi name is;
> In þat cuntre y was born, ywis.' (ll. 3578-9)
>
> 'Guy of Warrewik my name is;
> In the contree there y was borne, ywis' (*Caius Cambridge MS 107/176*, ll. 3941-2)[285]
>
> 'Gui de Warewic sui apelé
> En la terre u jo fu né' (ll. 3943-4)[286]

It would be tempting to infer that these Anglo-Norman words were perceived as almost interchangeable; nevertheless, an additional instance towards the end of the first part of the romance might uncover a rather nuanced scenario. When Guy informs his friend Tirri that the moment has come for him to return to his country, he significantly specifies that he must go back to his 'cuntre', which is not England, but rather in England.

> 'Now ichil gon sikerli
> Vnto mi cuntre into Jnglond' (ll. 6658-9)
>
> 'Now y shall goo, sikirly,
> To my Contree in-to Englonde' (ll. 7042-3)[287]
>
> 'desore m'en irrai sanz respit
> En mun pais, en Engleterre' (ll. 7144-5)[288]

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[284] *Gui de Warewic*, vol 1, 27. 'I am called Guy of Warwick and I was born in England' *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, p. 106.
[285] *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*, p. 227.
[286] *Gui de Warewic*, vol 1, p. 120. 'I am called Guy of Warwick in the land where I was born.' *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, p. 139.
[287] Caius version, *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*, p. 369.
[288] *Gui de Warewic*, vol 2, p. 13. 'Now I shall go without delay to my country, to England.' *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, p. 175.

Therefore, one is under the impression that 'cuntre' was used to refer to a specific area, ranging from county to country, to which a person was emotionally attached. The Middle English word 'cuntre' comes from the Anglo-Norman 'contree' meaning both 'region' and 'country'.[289] The French word derived in turn from the post-classical Latin 'contrata' meaning exclusively 'country'.[290] The Middle English word 'counte', meaning 'county', appears to have been mainly used starting from the fifteenth century. Therefore, its meaning might have been previously covered by the word 'cuntre'. Its etymology can be traced back to the Anglo-Norman word 'conté' and to the post-classical Latin 'comitatus', both meaning 'earldom', 'county', 'shire'. In its evolution from Latin to Middle English, the word 'cuntre' thus appears to have undergone a process of semantic widening, in which it even came to convey the very people living in a specific area / country.[291] The difficulties involved in providing a straightforward definition of the word 'cuntre' certainly mirror those encountered for 'natio', 'gens', 'populus', thus possibly emphasising the limits inherent in the use of rigid categories to describe fourteenth-century England.

The Anglo-Norman word 'pais' shows a similar semantic ambiguity. Although in Anglo-Norman it mainly stood for 'homeland',[292] it derives from the Latin 'pagus' meaning 'shire', 'county', thus essentially tracing yet another historical association between a specific area and the idea of homeland.[293] Since in the context of this romance, 'pais' refers to Warwickshire, the association between birthplace and homeland appears to be even reinforced. Further evidence might be uncovered in the passage describing Guy's taking on the pilgrim cloak. Scarcely has he left his home when the author comments that he is now indeed very far from Warwick: 'Now is Gij fram Warwike fare,' (l. 7320). Since his birthplace has been a defining part of his name as much as of his own self, he must

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[289] *AND*, https://anglo-norman.net/entry/a_1 [accessed on 15/01/2023]

[290] *DMF*, http://zeus.atilf.fr/dmf/ [accessed on 15/01/2023]. The classical Latin adverb 'contra' does not exclusively mean 'in front of', but also 'in relation to' or 'in opposition to', thus possibly implying that one's country could only be singled out by way of contrast with the others. *OED*, https://www.oed.com [accessed on 15/01/2023] *DMLBS*, http://clt.brepolis.net/dmlbs/pages/QuickSearch.aspx [accessed on 15/01/2023]

[291] *MED*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary [accessed on 15/01/2023]

[292] *AND*, https://anglo-norman.net/entry/a_1 [accessed on 15/01/2023]

[293] *DMLBS*, http://clt.brepolis.net/dmlbs/pages/QuickSearch.aspx [accessed on 15/01/2023]

leave it behind. Warwick thus becomes a metaphor for Guy's previous identity: his future cannot but be characterised by almost complete anonymity.

Significantly, although in the Anglo-Norman version the word 'Engleterre' is used throughout the text, the Middle English redactor shows an awareness of the potential of lexical variety for emphasising the different stages of Guy's life. In the first part of the romance, Guy mentions his birthplace as 'þat cuntre', whereas in the second he reports he was born in 'Jnglond', thus possibly implying that he fully understands his English identity only at the moment in which he takes on the role of country saviour.

> 'What cuntre artow?' þe king sede.
> 'Of Jnglond so God me rede;
> Þerin ich was yborn.' (ll. 7896-8)
>
> 'Di mei ore, par ta fei,
> U fustes nez e dunt venez.
> – Sire, fait Gui, ja l'orrez:
> Engleis sui, sacez de fi;
> En Engleterre, la fui nurri' (ll. 8272-6)[294]
>
> 'Cristen icham wele þou wost
> Of Jnglond born, ypliȝt.' (ll. 8236-7)
>
> 'Crestien sui, ore le savez.
> El regne d'Engletere fu né
> La fu nurri e adubbé' (ll. 8592-4)[295]
>
> 'Gij of Warwike mi name it is,
> In Jnglond y was born, ywis.' (ll. 8415-6)
>
> 'Gui de Warewic ai a nun,
> D'Engleterre, la regiun.' (ll. 8781-2)[296]

This emphasis on Guy's birthplace does not seem to have been included to comply with romance requirements, but rather to mirror the legal controversies about birth and succession rights. The Latin words 'oriundus' and 'natus' as well as their translations into French, 'ne' / 'neez' appear to have

[294] *Gui de Warewic*, vol 2, p. 47. 'Now tell me, upon your word, where you come from. My lord, said Guy, you should know for certain that I'm English; in England, that's where I was brought up.' *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, p. 187.
[295] *Gui de Warewic*, vol 2, p. 57. 'Know that I am Christian; I was born in the kingdom of England and there I was raised and knighted.' *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, p. 191
[296] *Gui de Warewic*, vol 2, p. 63. 'My name is Guy of Warwick, from the realm of England.' *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, p. 193.

enjoyed legal status and were systematically used to describe one's nationality. For instance, in the Ordinances of 1305, the cluster 'people born in the land of Scotland' functions as a synonym for Scots.[297] According to classical legal terminology, nationality is defined either by *ius soli* (birthplace) or by *ius sanguinis* (parentage). In practical terms, it was usually established by a combination of the two. Since nationality gave specific rights to the individual, it might come as no surprise that its definition was perceived as extremely relevant in fourteenth-century England. Many lords still possessed vast estates on the continent; therefore, the legal definition of their heirs' status was paramount. After the beginning of the Hundred Years' War, this need must have been even more compelling, as many such heirs were born of English parents temporarily set on the continent. In 1343, King Edward III was forced to issue a statute, *De Natis Ultra*, in order to have his sons born on the continent recognised as his lawful heirs by parliament.[298] In 1351, this principle was extended to all children born of English parents provided that their allegiance rested with the king.[299] Therefore, loyalty to the king became one of the *sine qua non* conditions for lawful inheritance in England.

The fight against the dragon of Northumberland is the first episode in which Guy's allegiance to his king and country is tested. Although he has just made his way to England after the shameful adventure at the court of Earl Florentine, his immense fame allows him to be welcomed at King Æthelstan's court as a hero. The description of Guy's combat in no way differs from the preceding ones: he volunteers to take on the fight alone, his earthly strength seems insufficient to overcome the apparently invulnerable enemy, he prays for God's deliverance and he almost miraculously succeeds in finding a way to dispose of his opponent. Guy almost instantaneously slays the dragon and presents the king with its head. The description of the reception of Guy's exploit is disappointingly laconic, as though it were but a mere anticipation of Guy's real future greatness.

> To Warwike he is ywent
> Wiþ þat heued he made þe king present.
> Þe king was bliþe & of glad chere
> For þat he seye Gij hole & fere.

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[297] Andrea Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture in the Fourteenth Century,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 116-7.
[298] Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture*, pp. 101-2.
[299] Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture*, p. 102.

At Warwik þai henge þe heued anon,
Mani man wondred þerapon. (ll. 6917-22)

Although Guy's fight against the dragon might be interpreted in the light of the customary struggle between good and evil, in the context of the whole manuscript it seems to take on nationalistic shades as well. Guy's being a dragon slayer not only allows for him to be raised to the rank of the greatest, but also to be a figure for England's patron saint. Just like Saint George, Guy embodies the combination of military prowess and holiness, which will be taken to be representative of the very idea of Englishness. Furthermore, this provisional ending in saintly overtones seems to mirror the actual romance conclusion, in which Guy does not stand for a mere figure of a saint, but rather for a saint himself.

The second episode involves a single fight against a Saracen giant in order to save England from the invading Danes. Unlike the previous episode, Guy's intervention as his country's saviour is not staged immediately, but rather prepared by stressing the increasing hopelessness of England's situation. When Guy returns to England the whole court is reunited at the King's palace in Winchester. They pray for a miracle. They need someone brave and skilled enough not only to face the Saracen giant, but also to win the fight. At this stage, King Æthelstan's prayers seems to have been unanswered. England is all but lost.

In the context of the Auchinleck Manuscript, King Æthelstan's plea to his parliament deserves close attention. Although the Auchinleck redactor provides a fairly close translation of this passage, some significant differences might still be detected. In the Anglo-Norman original, King Æthelstan appeals to his barons by evoking the preservation of their estates and their consequent legal and moral obligations towards their families.[300] No reference to a specific venue is made, as though this redactor implicitly wanted to suggest that the barons had gathered at the king's court.

Francs chevaliers, ore vus purveez!
Vos sunt les chastels e les citez,
Les larges terres e les maneres
E les forestz de bestes pleneres;
Sovenge vus de voz tenemenz granz,
De voz femmes, de voz enfanz;

[300] Richmond, *The Legend of Guy of Warwick*, p. 58.

Si par voz feblesces les perdez,
A tut dis mes honiz serrez. (ll. 10871-8)[301]

King Æthelstan's direct address to his own parliament certainly conforms to the general trend of the Auchinleck collection to depict Anglo-Saxon settings in the light of fourteenth-century English institutions. Unlike his Anglo-Norman counterpart, the Middle English King Æthelstan appears to evoke a sense of national unity in which the barons are expected to fight for England against a common enemy.[302] It is in fact their responsibility to prevent the Danes from turning the whole of England into 'þraldom'.

Þe king seyd 'lordinges alle,
Mine men ȝe ben verrament,
Þerfore ich ax wiþouten fayl
Of þis Danis folk wil ous aseyl
Ich biseche ȝou wiþ gode entent,
For Godes loue y pray ȝou
Gode conseyl ȝiue me now
Or elles we ben al schent.
[…]
ȝif he ouercom ous in batayle
He wil slen ous alle saunfeyle
& strouen al our kende.
Þan schal Jnglond euermo
Liue in þraldom & (&) in wo
Vnto þe warldes ende.' (ll. 9772-91)

Yet, the king's plea falls on deaf ears. The disheartening silence engulfing the hall can all too well demonstrate that Guy's era of heroism has tragically come to an end. No knight capable of taking on England's fight can in fact be found.

'Þerfore ich axi ȝou now riȝt
ȝif ȝe knowe our ani kniȝt
Þat is so stout & bold
Þat þe batayle dar take an hond
To fiȝt oȝain Colbrond.
Half mi lond haue he schold
Wiþ alle þe borwes þat liþ þerto,
To him & to his aires euermo
To haue ȝiue he wold.'
[S]til seten erls & barouns
As men hadde schauen her crounes;
Nouȝt on answere nold. (ll. 9792-803)

[301] *Gui de Warewic*, vol 2, p. 126. 'Noble knights, now prepare yourselves! Yours are the castles and the cities, the wide domains and the manors, and the forests full of animals. Remember your great possessions, your wives and your children; if you lose them through your weakness, you will be shamed forever.' *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui de Warewic*, p. 218.
[302] Djordjević, 'Nation and Translation', pp. 127-34.

Nevertheless, if no baron can provide the name of England's champion, God Himself will see to it. King Æthelstan receives a heavenly visitation: an angel informs him that he will find England's saviour dressed in pilgrim clothes at the town's gates.

> Þer com an angel fram heuen-liȝt
> & seyd to þe king ful riȝt
> Þurth grace of Godes sond. (ll. 9828-30)

Guy of Warwick immediately accepts the fight in spite of his old age, as though he has gained full understanding of his role as an instrument of God's will. Just like that against Amourant, this fight is preceded by the arming of both hero and villain. Yet, no sword of Hector, no helmet of Alexander and no hauberk of Clarel (or possibly Charlemagne) will give Guy additional strength. The English hero can only rely upon the power of his Christian faith.

> 'Lord' seyd Gij 'þat rered Lazeroun
> & for man þoled passioun
> & on þe rode gan blede,
> Þat saued Sussan fram þe feloun
> & halp Daniel fram þe lyoun,
> Today wisse me & rede.
> Astow art miȝti heuen-king
> Today graunt me þi blisseing
> & help me at þis nede;
> & leuedi Mari ful of miȝt
> Today saue Jnglondes riȝt
> & leue me wele to spede.' (ll. 9936-47)

He prays that God will make him victorious and assist England in its darkest hour. Guy's triumph over Colbrond is painted in both religious and nationalistic shades. 'Gij Þe Englisse' fought for England, 'Gij Þe Cristen' for England as a subset of the whole of Christendom. Yet, assuming that people's identities are somehow hierarchically ordered, one would expect Guy's allegiance to God to come before any other, including that to his king and country. Nevertheless, his transformation into the English national hero being characterised by religious undertones might demonstrate the extent to which national and religious identities were perceived as enjoying an equal status. This episode cannot but pave the way for the final stage of Guy's life first as a hermit, then as almost a saint.

4.10 'Guy the Saint'

After the fight, Guy discloses his identity to the King alone and refuses all recompense for his incredible deed. Unrecognised, he spends some time amongst the poor begging for sustenance at the gates of Felice's castle, in Warwick. Although a re-union with his wife would have made a perfect happy ending to a romance, Guy must aim for a much bigger prize: the bliss of heaven; therefore, his renunciation of the world must be complete. He leaves Warwick in order to join the hermit dwelling in the forest nearby and receive religious instruction. When he finally reaches the hermitage, the holy man has already died; nevertheless, Guy's desire to increase his religious knowledge creates an additional parallel with another text from the Auchinleck collection, the *Speculum Guy of Warwick*.[303] For the *Guy*-poet, the hero's intention to serve God alone and the consequent almost complete anonymity surrounding his later deeds are enough to transform 'Gij þe gode kniȝt' into a proper *miles Christi*. Guy has passed through all stages of penance: his contrition has been followed by a life uniquely devoted to the militant service of God. His absolution is confirmed by the words of the angel announcing Guy's upcoming death.

> In slepe as Gij lay aniȝt
> God sent an angel briȝt
> Fram heuen to him þare.
> 'Gij' seyd þe angel 'slepestow?
> Hider me sent þe king Ihesu
> To bid þe make þe ȝare,
> For bi þe eiȝtenday at morwe
> He schal deliuer þe out of þi sorwe
> Out of þis warld to fare.
> To heuen þou schalt com him to
> & liue wiþ ous euer mo
> In ioie wiþouten care.' (ll. 10320-31)

Unlike King Arthur, Guy of Warwick is not to return in order to rescue Albion whenever it needs him. His death is conclusive and his place is not the Celtic Avalon, but rather the Christian heaven.

Felice herself describes her husband's new endeavour as a pilgrimage, 'Mi lord is went fro me his way | In pilgrimage to fond' (ll. 7348-9). Yet, any such journey should be carried out both inwardly and outwardly and should aim at a specific end. Guy's pilgrimage is not merely characterised by a

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[303] See Chapter 1.3.

journey across the Holy Places, but rather by his own increasing understanding of the true meaning of a form of chivalry entirely based upon humility. Guy's 'Jerusalem Celestial' is not the earthly Jerusalem, but rather the same place he left many years before. The idea of pilgrimage perfectly suits the meritocratic society the *Guy*-poet had in mind, as it could potentially be undertaken by anyone, not exclusively by aristocrats.[304] As stressed by Helen Cooper, 'Crusading linked the two forms, quest and pilgrimage'.[305] This combination of martial skills and religious fervour is the kind of chivalry the *Guy*-poet had in mind for his national hero. The very embodiment of Englishness should thus be that of a warrior more prompted by religious devotion than by the canons of courtly love, closer to Chaucer's Knight than to his son, the Squire.

Guy provides his audience with a model of knighthood to emulate, one to admire for his physical strength, compassion, loyalty and unshakable faith in God, the embodiment of those same values that were considered foundational of the English nation. This role being given to a hero solidly associated with a historical Anglo-Saxon king might not have been an accidental choice. After all, shared historical roots, common language and set of values are the very pillars upon which national identity is constructed. Horn, Beues of Hamtoun and Guy of Warwick might not have entered the Fifth Sphere of Dante's *Paradiso*. They might not have taken their place amongst Roland, Godfrey of Bouillon or William of Orange in the sphere of the Warriors of the Faith; nevertheless, they succeed in entering the pantheon of the greatest English heroes, so much so that Geoffrey Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales* used them as a term of comparison for his own Sir Thopas. The comic effect could only be achieved in so far as they were at that point considered true *exempla* of knightly prowess.

> Men speken of romances of prys,
> Of Horn child and of Ypotys,
> Of Beves and sir Gy,
> Of sir Lybeux and Pleyndamour –
> But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
> Of roial chivalry! (Riverside, *Sir Thopas* 897–902)[306]

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[304] Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 98.
[305] Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, p. 99.
[306] Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 216.

5 Conclusion

In his 1996 seminal book *England the Nation*, Thorlac Turville-Petre famously describes the Auchinleck Manuscript as a 'handbook of the nation', on the grounds of its overtly nationalistic, linguistic and thematic choices. This collection would thus have been conceived to comply with the requests of a patron who showed considerable enthusiasm for all things English. Apart from the interest in England's ancient past, the Manuscript is also characterised by the pervasiveness of crusading imagery. This led Turville-Petre to hypothesise an aristocratic patron whose ancestors took part in the Crusades.[1] The current study has been inspired by Turville-Petre's assumptions and aimed at searching codicological and textual evidence to support the hypothesis that the Auchinleck Manuscript was deliberately designed to reflect on the characteristics of English national identity and to promote it through the celebration of a glorious past reverberating not only in the legends of England's greatest heroes, but also in the country's historical landscape.

In order to determine whether the manuscript was meant to comply with a specific political agenda, it proves fundamental to understand whether the text selection was driven by careful planning or by the accidental combination of a series of independent booklets. Codicological evidence ranging from textual arrangement to the item numbering or even to the position of what remains of certain illuminations appear to corroborate the assumption that at least at a certain stage of its production, the manuscript was likely to have been carefully planned. Intertextual allusions as well as thematic coherence would further support the idea that it was conceived as a whole from the very beginning.

The existence of a specific project behind the genesis of the Auchinleck Manuscript immediately leads to the matter of the patron's identity. Physical and textual elements were thus used to investigate the hypothesis of an aristocratic patronage. The few names scattered throughout the manuscript reveal that at least at the beginning of the fifteenth century it might have been in the hands of a wealthy family of merchants. Nevertheless, this is not evidence in itself that it was originally conceived for a

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[1] Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, pp. 108-41.

middle-class audience. The emphasis on political crisis and legal matters concerning inheritance rights, the representation of several Anglo-Saxon saint-kings intimately connected with the royal household, the ubiquity of crusading imagery as well as textual allusions to possible patrons, such as the Beauchamp family, might further corroborate the assumption that the manuscript was conceived for an aristocratic household. However, none of this evidence could be considered conclusive in uncovering the identity of this manuscript's patron.

Although at the beginning of the fourteenth century Anglo-Norman was certainly widespread within the English aristocracy, the almost exclusive use of Middle English appears to have been driven more by an ideological stand than by practical reasons. An in-depth analysis of the lexicon used reveals that it is significantly characterised by French-derived words, thus possibly reinforcing the idea that the linguistic claims made in the prologues of *King Richard* and *Of Arthour and of Merlin* are in fact of political nature. England's long-lasting heroic tradition thus needs to be celebrated in the language of the nation.

National identity proves to rest not only on linguistic, but also on historical cohesion. The analysis of the Auchinleck's reputed additions to the extant contemporary versions of the *Liber Regum Angliae* reveals that this text was meticulously reworked in order to comply with a nationalistic agenda. The duplication of the myth of origin that sees the story of Albina juxtaposed with that of Brutus in a kind of ultimate *traslatio imperii* is not the sole invention of the Auchinleck redactor. The Galfridian Hengist is in fact transformed into the ideal king who conquers lands and prestige abroad by contemporarily maintaining peace and justice within his country's borders. The description of the Norman invasion can all too well demonstrate the length this redactor was prepared to go in order to present a version of the English history consistent with the general nationalistic trend characterising this manuscript. William the Conqueror thus becomes a mere invader who subjugated the glorious native populations. The reappropriation of the Anglo-Saxon past appears to serve two purposes: not only does it allow for the creation of a line of prestigious local holiness, but it also provides the Plantagenet kings with a solid historical connection with England. On the grounds of the numerous

intertextual references, Turville-Petre defines it 'the backbone to which the "historical" texts are attached'. This version of the *Liber Regum Angliae* appears in fact to have been deliberately created in order to provide this manuscript with some sort of historical interpretative key through which the other texts about England's past should be understood.

Nevertheless, the English identity is not exclusively characterised by a people's allegiance to one's king and country, but rather by that to God as well. The romances on Charlemagne and his *douzepers* allowed for this redactor to appropriate the French crusading epic repertoire by constructing a supernational Christian heritage shared by all Western Christianity. Charlemagne's deeds are thus incorporated into the general powerful history of Christianity and, by extension, into that of England as well. The role of Charlemagne is never questioned; nevertheless, the raising prestige of the English leader of the Third Crusade allowed him to establish himself alongside the Carolingian King as a member of the Christian triad of the *Nine Worthies*. And yet, the Plantagenet king is definitely not England's sole son whose deeds will be compared to those of the greatest: Horn, Beues of Hamtoun and Guy of Warwick came in fact to embody the country's very flowers of Christian chivalry. Cristian and national identity thus appear to converge in the figure of King Richard I, who becomes the very model of militant Christianity. The portrait of the ideal English knight is thus that of a *miles Christi* who excels in martial skills as much as in religious devotion. In the Auchinleck Manuscript, the crusading context works as a further stage upon which the English national identity can be. Calkin and others have emphasised the role played by the Saracens in the process of identity creation, by stressing the extent to which their alterity could provide a counter example for the Christian leaders. Nevertheless, the analysis of the corpus of the Auchinleck Manuscript reveals that the word 'Saracen' is not exclusively used in a crusading context, thus possibly implying that it was merely yet another word for 'enemy'. The emphasis on the Saracens might well have been prompted by the pre-eminence enjoyed by the theme of the Crusades in the fourteenth century; nevertheless, considering this manuscript in the historical context of the Anglo-Scottish wars, it might also have functioned as means to allude to a neighbouring enemy.

Vernacular literature appears to be the main medium whereby ideas of national identity could be disseminated, as it stages the values that are perceived as foundational in a given society. Although most of the Auchinleck romances derive from Anglo-Norman originals, the texts presented in its sources appear to have been substantially reworked in order to mirror the contemporary baronial preoccupations around succession rights, ideal kingship and the administration of justice. Even the Arthurian legend is transformed into an arena in which the risks of political instability are depicted at length. Although the definition of Matter of England appears somehow problematic, the texts featuring English heroes and staging England's past might reveal a desire to create some sort of literary canon insular in nature. The celebration of England's past as well as the emphasis on geographical accuracy both function as unifying agents by fostering a sense of belonging to one's homeland. The great political instability provoked by Edward II's disastrous campaigns in Scotland, poor administration of the law, as well as inclination towards favourites could only put to question the barons' entire set of allegiances. Therefore, it might come as no surprise that in *Horn Childe*, *Beues of Hamtoun* and *Guy of Warwick* the challenges involving the hero's contrasting allegiances are constantly staged. The English national identity is thus depicted as multifaced and inherently complex.

It is impossible to determine with any certainty the circumstances that led to this manuscript's creation; nevertheless, it seems unlikely that it was the result of an isolated effort aimed at complying with the peculiar requests of an eccentric patron. This might rather reflect a general feeling originating from the dissemination of nationalistic propaganda on the verge of the Hundred Year's war. The spreading of such a propaganda might have allowed Edward III to gain the necessary political and financial support to start the longest war in the Middle Ages.

Appendix 1 – Plates

Plate 1. The Sultan praying before a pagan altar / The Sultan praying God with the King of Tars’ daughter (fol. 7r)

Plate 2. Christ in throne offering the *Pater Noster* to humankind. (fol. 72r)

Plate 3. Reinbroun fighting against the fairy knight (fol. 167r)

Plate 4. Beues of Hamtoun (fol. 176r)

Plate 5. Þe Wenche þat Loved þe King (fol. 256v)

Plate 6. King Richard making his way through Acre’s fortifications (fol. 326r)

Plate 7. The Crusader army approaching a Saracen fortress (fol. 187v) London, British Library, Royal MS 19 D I

Plate 8. London, British Library, Royal MS 12 C XII, folio 67v

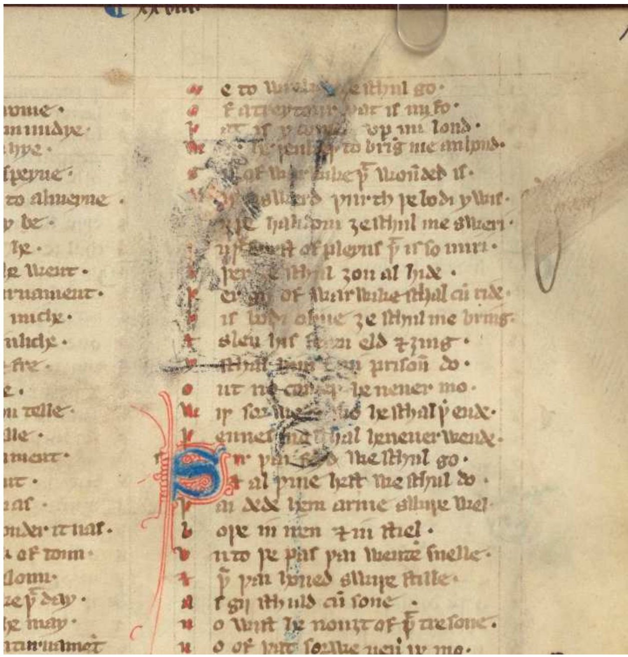
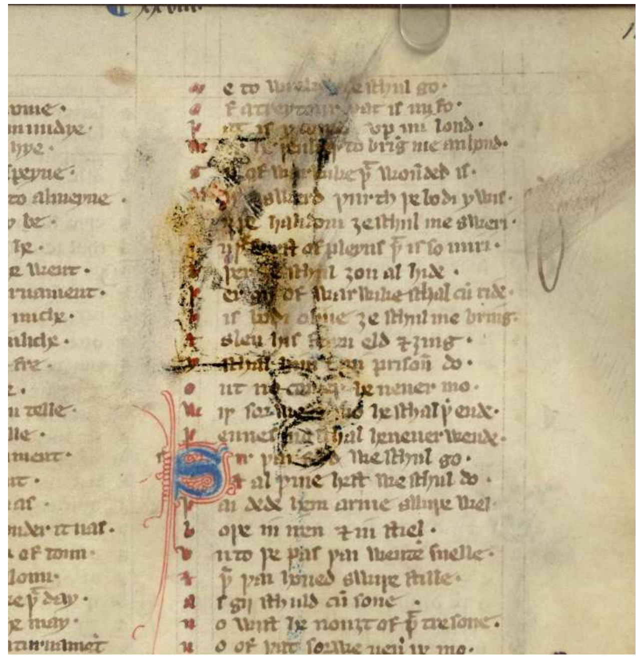

Plate 9. folio 114r (with contrast enhancement on the right) showing a historiated large ‘L’

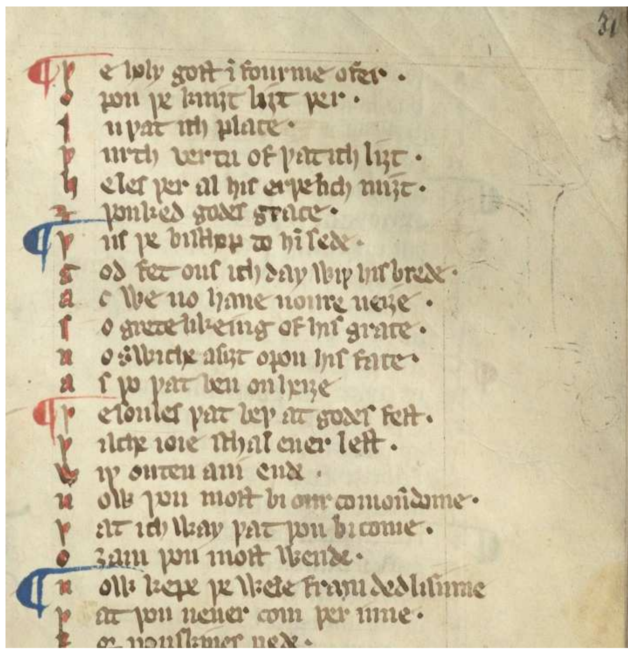
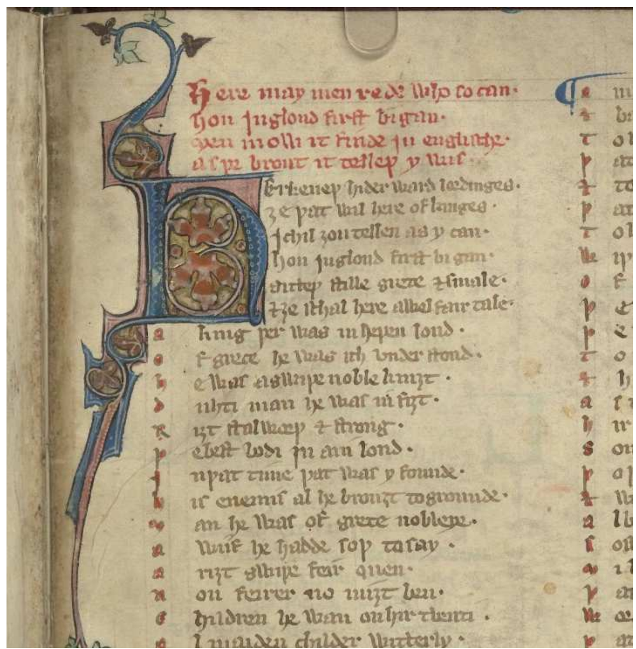

Plate 10. folio 31r (on the left) and folio 304r (on the right) showing the same decorated initial ‘H’

Appendix 2 – Catchwords

Booklet	Quire	Folio	Catchword /first line on the following folio	Item Number	Title	Scribe
1	1	4 leaves missing				
		1 to 3		1 (6)	The Legend of Pope Gregory	Scribe 1
		4	He was a dreri moder			
	2	5	*He was a dreri moder*			
		6				
		7 to 10		2 (7)	The King of Tars	Scribe 1
		11	As priueliche as it			
	3	12	*As priueliche as it*			
		13				
		missing		3 (8)	The Life of Adam and Eve	Scribe 1
		Ef.1				
		Ef.2				
		missing				
		14				
		15	Þat he schuld for his			
	4	16	*Þat he schuld for his*			
		17 to 21		4 (9)	Seynt Mergrete	Scribe 1
		22		5 (10)	Seynt Katerine	Scribe 1
		23	Sche sett hir doun			
	5	24	*Sche sett hir doun*			
		24a				
		25 to 29		6 (11)	St Patrick's Purgatory	Scribe 1
		30	& honoureþ nouȝt her			
	6	31	*& honoureþ nouȝt her*			
		32 to 35		7 (12)	þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi & þe Soule	Scribe 1
		36		8 (13)	The Harrowing of Hell	Scribe 1
		37				
		38	Herknþ al to mi speche	9 (14)	The Clerk who would see the Virgin	Scribe 1
2	7	39	*Herkneþ alle to my speche*	10 (15)	Speculum Gy de Warewyke	Scribe 2
		40 to 46				
	8	47 to 53				
		54	When þat sir Amis had	11 (16)	Amis and Amiloun	Scribe 1
	9	55	*When þat sir Amis hadde*			
		56 to 61a				
	10	62 to 65		12 (17)	The Life of St Mary Magdalene	Scribe 1
		66 to 68		13 (17)	The Nativity and Early Life of Mary	Scribe 1
		69	Ihesu þatt for one wald die			
3	11	70	*Ihesu þat for vs wold die*	14 (21)	On the Seven Deadly Sins	Scribe 3
		71 to 72				
		72a		15 (22)	The Paternoster	Scribe 3
		73 to 76		16 (23)	The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin	Scribe 3
	12	77				
		78				

Booklet	Quire	Folio	Catchword /first line on the following folio	Item Number	Title	Scribe
		79 to 84		17 (24)	Sir Degare	Scribe 3
	13	84a to 91		18 (25)	The Seven Sages of Rome	Scribe 3
	14	92 to 98				
		99	& tvay naser*			
	15			Gathering missing (c 1400 lines of text)		
	16	100 to 104		19 (26)	Floris and Blancheflour	Scribe 3
		104				
		105		20 (26)	The Sayings of the Four Philosophers	Scribe 2
		106		21 (27)	The Battle Abbey Roll	Scribe 4
		107	here ginneth sir Gij			
4	17	107a		f.107Ar / f.107Av (thin stub)		
		108 to 113		22 (28)	Guy of Warwick (couplets)	Scribe 1
		114	Also alyoun that			
	18	115	*Als a lyoun he*			
		116 to 120a				
	19	121 to 127				
		128	& seþþe he lepe adoun			
	20	129	*& seþþe he lepe adoun*			
		130 to 135				
		136	& he wille amend to			
	21	137	*& he wil amend oȝines*			
		138 to 143				
		144	Gij him wiþ went nold			
	22	145	*Gij him wiþ went wold*			
		146 to 151				
		152	To Espire þat riche	23 (28)	Guy of Warwick (stanzas)	Scribe 1
	23	153	*To Espire þat riche*			
		154 to 159				
		160	He hit him on þe helm			
	24	161	*He hit on þe helm*			
		162 to 167				
		168	ȝif felonn queþ þerl of Cornwa	24 (29)	Reinbroun	Scribe 5
	25	169	*Pes feloun queþ erl of Cornewayle*			
		170 to 175				
		missing		leaf missing		
	26	176 to 182		25 (30)	Sir Beues of Hamtoun	Scribe 5

Booklet	Quire	Folio	Catchword /first line on the following folio	Item Number	Title	Scribe
		183	So wiþ in a litel stounde			
5	27	184	*So wiþinne a lite stounde*			
		185 to 188				
		missing				
		189				
		190	Ad [ne] mened seyn Gorge our			
	28	191	*A nemenede sein Gorge our*			
		192 to 197				
		198	Hy seyd yuore lete be þat			
	29	199	*He seide yuor let be þat*			
		200 to 201				
		202 to 205		26 (31)	Of Arthour & of Merlin	Scribe 1
		206	Þat child spac			
	30	207	*Þat child spac*			
		208 to 213				
		214	Þe douke tintagel			
	31	215	*Þe douke tintagel*			
		216 to 221				
		222	Þat her pauilouns			
	32	223	*Þat her pauilouns*			
		224 to 229				
		230	he slouȝ to grounde al			
	33	231	*& slouȝ to grounde al*			
		232 to 237				
		238	Þurth swerd & ax			
	34	239	*Þurth swerd & ax*			
		240 to 245				
		246	XV þousinde þat hadde			
	35	247	*XV þousinde þat hadden*			
		248 to 253				
		254	Fleand his sw			
	36	missing				
		255 to 256				
		256a		27 (32)	þe Wenche þat Loved þe King	Scribe 1
		257 to 259		28 (33)	A Peniworþ of Witt	Scribe 1
		260	We redeþ oft & findeþ ywrite	29 (34)	How Our Lady's Sauter was First Found	Scribe 1
6	37	261	*We redeþ oft & findeþ [ywri]te*	30 (35)	Lay le Freine	Scribe 1

Booklet	Quire	Folio	Catchword /first line on the following folio	Item Number	Booklet	Quire
		262				
		262a to 266		31 (36)	Roland and Vernagu	Scribe 1
		267	Herkneþ boþe ȝing & old			
7	38	268	*Herkneþ boþe ȝinge & olde*	32 (37)	Otuel a Kniȝt	Scribe 6
		269 to 277				
	39			missing (possibly other missing quires)		
8	40	missing		33 (44)	Kyng Alisaunder	Scribe 1
		missing				
		Lf.1				
		S A.15				
		S.A.15				
		Lf.2				
		missing				
		missing				
	41	278				
		279		34	The Thrush and the Nightingale	Scribe 1
		missing				
		missing				
		missing				
		missing				
		missing				
		280		35	The Sayings of St Bernard	Scribe 1
		280	I was at Erþeldoun	36	Dauid þe King	Scribe 1
9	42	281	*I was a[t Erceldoune]*	37 (51)	Sir Tristrem	Scribe 1
		282 to 287				
		288	Wiþ siȝt			
	43	289	*Wiþ siȝt*			
		290 to 295				
		296	Þe geaunt him tauȝt			
	44	297	*Þe geaunt him tauȝt*			
		298 to 299				
		299a		38	Sir Orfeo	Scribe 1
		300 to 302				
		303	He may men rede who so can	39 (52)	The Four Foes of Mankind	Scribe 1
10	45	304	*Here may men rede whoso can*	40 (53)	The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle	Scribe 1
		305 to 310				
		311	He made þe reume hole			
	46	312	*He made þe reawme hole*			
		313 to 317				

Booklet	Quire	Folio	Catchword /first line on the following folio	Item Number	Title	Scribe
		318		41 (54)	Horn Childe & Maiden Rimnild	Scribe 1
		319	To wite & nouȝt			
	47	320	*To wite & nouȝt*			
		321				
		missing				
		322 to 323				
		missing		leaf missing.		
		324		42 (55)	Alphabetical Praise of Women	Scribe 1
		325	Lord Ihesu kyng of glorie			
11	48	326	*Lord Ihesu kyng of glorie*	43 (56)	King Richard	Scribe 1
		E.F.3				
		missing				
		SR.4				
		SR.4				
		missing				
		E.F.4				
		327	þe sarraȝins seyȝe þai			
	49	0		Many leaves lost		
	50	0				
	51	0				
12	52	328 to 334		44	þe Simonie	Scribe 2
		missing				

Appendix 3 – Manuscripts and Editions[1]

Item No	Title	Other Manuscripts	Editions
1 (6)	**The Legend of Pope Gregory**	**Bodleian Library MS 3938** (Bodl. poet. A.1) (Vernon) | **Bodleian MS 14716** (Rawlinson F.225) | **BL Cotton Cleopatra D.ix**.	W. B. D. D. Turnbull, *Legendae Catholicae,* Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing Company, 1840 | Fritz Schulz, *Die Englische Gregorlegende*. Königsberg: Hartungschen, 1876 | C. Keller, *Die Mittelenglische Gregoriuslegende*, Heidelberg: Stechert, 1914. ***IMEV 209 | DIMEV 370***
2 (7)	**The King of Tars**	**Bodleian Library MS 3938** (Bodl. poet. A.1) (Vernon). W. Midlands. Late 14th or early 15th century. Vernon also has in common with Auchinleck: *The Legend of Pope Gregory*, *Þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi and þe Soule* and *The Sayings of St Bernard.* | **BL Additional MS 22283** (Simeon). W. Midlands. 1380-1400. Simeon also has *Þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi and þe Soule* in common with Auchinleck.	F. Krause, 'Kleine Publicationen aus der Auchinleck-hs: IX, The King of Tars', *Englische Studien*, 11 (1888), pp. 33-62 | J. Perryman, *The King of Tars: Edited from the Auchinleck Manuscript, Advocates 19.2.1, Middle English Texts 12,* Heidelberg: Winter, 1980. ***IMEV 1108 | DIMEV 1789***
3 (8)	**The Life of Adam and Eve**	Unique copy	D. Laing, *A Penni Worth of Witte*, Edinburgh: Abbotsford Club, 1857 | C. Horstmann, *Life of Adam and Eve, Altenglische Legenden, Neue Folge*, Heilbronn: Henninger, 1878 | B. Murdoch and J. A. Tasionlas, *The Apocryphal Lives of Adam and Eve, Edited from the Auchinleck MS and from Trinity College, Oxford MS 57,* Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2002.| ***IMEV *43 | DIMEV 3082***
4 (9)	**Seynt Mergrete**	Unique copy but related to earlier versions	W. B. D. D. Turnbull, *Legendae Catholicae*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing Company, 1840 | C. Horstmann, *St. Mergrete: Altenglische Legenden, Neue Folge*, Heilbronn: Henninger, 1881. ***IMEV 203 | DIMEV 364***
5 (10)	**Seynt Katerine**	Unique copy	W. B. D. D. Turnbull, *Legendae Catholicae*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing Company, 1840 | C. Horstmann, *St. Katerine, Altenglische Legenden, Neue Folge*, Heilbronn: Henninger, 1881 | I. C. Yim, 'Seynt Katerine: A Critical Edition', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southwestern Louisiana (1997). ***IMEV 1159 | DIMEV 1182***
6 (11)	**St Patrick's Purgatory**	Unique version.	W. B. D. D. Turnbull and D. Laing, *Owain Miles*, Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1837 | E. Kölbing, 'Zwei Mittelenglische Bearbeitungen der Sage von St. Patrik's Purgatorium', *Englische Studien*, 1 (1877), pp. 98-112 | R. Easting, *St Patrick's Purgatory*, EETS OS 298, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991 | *Three Purgatory Poems: The Gast of Guy, Sir Owain, The Vision of Tundale*, edited by Edward E. Foster, Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University for TEAMS, 2004. ***IMEV *11 | DIMEV 524***
7 (12)	**þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi & þe Soule**	**BL Additional MS 22283** (Simeon). W. Midland. 1380-1400. Simeon also has *The King of Tars* in common with Auchinleck. | **BL Additional MS 37787**. 62 stanzas. Early 15th century | **BL Royal MS 18.A.x.** 67 stanzas. c.1425-50 | **Bodleian Library MS 1486** (Laud Misc. 108). 61 stanzas. c.1275-1325. Laud 108 also has *The Sayings of St Bernard* in common with Auchinleck | **Bodleian Library MS 1703** (Digby 102). 67 or 68 stanzas. Early 15th century | **Bodleian Library MS 3938** (Bodl. poet. A.1) (Vernon). 62 stanzas. W. Midland. Late 14th or early 15th century. Vernon also has in common with Auchinleck: *The Legend of Pope Gregory*, *The Sayings of St Bernard* and *The King of Tars.*	D. Laing, *Owain Miles*, Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1837 | W. Linow, *Þe Desputisoun Bitwen þe Bodi and þe Soule, Erlanger Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie, 1*, Erlangen: Böhme, 1889 | *Middle English Debate Poetry: A Critical Anthology,* edited by John W. Conlee, East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1991. ***IMEV 351 | DIMEV 605***

[1] All information on the editions of the texts contained in the Auchinleck Manuscript has been taken from *The Auchinleck Manuscript,* edited by David Burnley and Alison Wiggins, [accessed on 20/05/2020] and from *DIMEV*, https://www.dimev.net/ [accessed on 01/07/2022]. The *IMEV* number has been taken from *The Index of Middle English Verse,* edited by Carleton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins, New York: Columbia University Press, 1943, whereas the *DIMEV* number has been taken from *DIMEV*, https://www.dimev.net/ [accessed on 01/07/2022]. An asterisk before the *IMEV* number marks the acephalous poems as in Brown and Robbins edition of the *Index.*

Item No	Title	Other Manuscripts	Editions
8 (13)	**The Harrowing of Hell**	**Bodleian Library MS 1687** (Digby 86). c.1275. 250 lines. Digby 86 also has in common with Auchinleck: *The Sayings of St Bernard, How Our Lady's Sauter was First Found,* and *The Thrush and the Nightingale*. | **BL Harley MS 2253**. c.1310. W. Midlands (Ludlow). 248 lines. Harley 2253 also has in common with Auchinleck: *The Alphabetical Praise of Women* and *The Sayings of St Bernard.*	D. Laing, *Owain Miles*, Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1837 | H. Varnhagen, *Praemissa est Editionis Criticae Retustissimi quod Sermone Anglico Conscriptum est Dramatis Pars Prior,* Erlangen: Iunge, 1898) | W. H. Hulme, *The Middle English Harrowing of Hell*, EETS ES 100, London: Trübner, 1907. ***IMEV *11 | DIMEV 334***
9 (14)	**The Clerk who would see the Virgin**	Unique copy	C. Horstmann, *Of a Clerk who would see the Virgin, Altenglische Legenden, Neue Folge*, Heilbronn: Henninger, 1881 | B. Boyd, *Middle English Miracles of the Virgin,* San Marino: Huntington Library, 1964. ***IMEV *4 | DIMEV 474***
10 (15)	**Speculum Gy de Warewyke**	**BL Royal MS 17.B.xvii | BL Harley 1731 | BL Arundel 140**. Arundel 140 also has *The Seven Sages of Rome* in common with Auchinleck. | **CUL MS Dd.11.89 | BL Harley 525 | BL Additional MS 36983 |** Manchester, John Rylands Library**, MS 45388** (Engl. 50) | **St John's College Cambridge MS 256 | Bodleian Library MS 29430** (Add. C.220).	G. L. Morrill, *Speculum Gy de Warewyke*, EETS ES 75, London: Trübner, 1898. ***IMEV 1101 | DIMEV 1782***
11 (16)	**Amis and Amiloun**	**BL Egerton MS 2862** (olim Trentham-Sutherland). Late 14th century. Suffolk. Text complete, but 332 lines lost after line 1853. Egerton also has in common with Auchinleck: *King Richard*, *Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Sir Degare,* and *Floris and Blancheflour* | **Bodleian Library, MS Douce 326**. Dorset. c.1500. Text contains 2395 lines and is relatively complete | **BL Harley MS 2386**. Late 15th century. Fragmentary. *Amis* copied into the MS by William Cressett, apparently a butler, who left the text unfinished.	M. R. Weber, *Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries,* 3 vols, Edinburgh: Constable, 1810 | E. Kölbing, *Amis und Amiloun, Altenglische Bibliothek,* vol 2, Heilbronn: Henninger, 1884 | M. Leach, *Amis and Amiloun*, EETS OS 203, London: Humphrey Milford for Oxford University Press, 1937 | *Amis and Amiloun, Robert of Cisyle, and Sir Amadace,* edited by Edward E. Foster, Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University for TEAMS, 1997. ***IMEV 821 | DIMEV 1350***
12 (17)	**The Life of St Mary Magdalene**	Unique copy	W. B. D. D. Turnbull, *Legendae Catholicae,* Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing Company, 1840 | C. Horstmann, *Sammlung Altenglische Legenden, Neue Folge*, Heilbronn: Henninger, 1878. ***IMEV *12 | DIMEV 526***
13 (17)	**The Nativity and Early Life of Mary**	Unique copy, but a further nine MSS of the South English Nativity of Mary and Christ (part of the South English Legendary) contain closely related texts	W. B. D. D. Turnbull, *Legendae Catholicae*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing Company, 1840 | O. S. Pickering, *The South English Nativity of Mary and Christ, Middle English Texts 1*, Heidelberg: Winter, 1975. ***IMEV 213;3997 | DIMEV 6380;376***
14 (21)	**On the Seven Deadly Sins**	Unique copy	D. Laing, *A Penni Worth of Witte*, Edinburgh: Abbotsford Club, 1857 | E. Kölbing, 'Kleine Publications aus der Auchinleck-hs', *Englische Studien*, 9 (1886), pp. 42-6. ***IMEV 1760 | DIMEV 2914***
15 (22)	**The Paternoster**	Unique copy	D. Laing, *A Penni Worth of Witte*, Edinburgh: Abbotsford Club, 1857 | E. Kölbing, 'Kleine Publicationen aus der Auchinleck-hs', *Englische Studien*, 9 (1886), pp. 47-9. ***IMEV 206 | DIMEV 367***
16 (23)	**The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin**	Unique stanzaic version, although the source material is used in many other manuscript versions.	M. Schwarz, 'Kleine Publicationen aus der Auchinleck-hs', *Englische Studien*, 8 (1885), pp. 448-57. ***IMEV *75 | DIMEV 6596***
17 (24)	**Sir Degare**	**Bodleian Library MS 21835** (Douce 261). 1564. Transcript of an early print. Fragments | **Bodleian Library MS 14528** (Rawlinson F.34). Late 15th century | **CUL Ff.2.38** (olim no. 690). Late 15th century. Ff.2.38 also has in common with Auchinleck: *A Peniworþ of Witt, Sir Beues of Hamtoun, The Seven Sages of Rome* and *Guy of Warwick* (different version) | **BL Egerton MS 2862** (olim Trentham-Sutherland). Late 14th century. Suffolk. Fragments. Egerton also has in common with Auchinleck: *King Richard, Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Floris and Blancheflour,* and *Amis and Amiloun* | **BL Additional MS 27879** (Percy Folio). c.1650. The Percy Folio also has a version of *Arthour and of Merlin* in common with Auchinleck.	D. Laing, *Sire Degarre, Abbotsford Club 28*, Edinburgh: Alex. Laurie and Co., 1849 | M. B. Carr, 'Sir Degarre', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago (1924) | G. Schleich, *Sir Degarre, Englische Textbibliothek 19*, Heidelberg: Winter, 1929 | W. H. French and C. B. Hale, *Middle English Metrical Romances*, New York: Prentice-Hall, 1930 | *The Middle English Breton Lays*, edited by A. Laskaya and E. Salisbury, Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University for TEAMS, 1995. ***IMEV 1895 | DIMEV 3116***

Item No	Title	Other Manuscripts	Editions
18 (25)	**The Seven Sages of Rome**	A-redaction: **BL Arundel MS 140**. Arundel also has the *Speculum Gy de Warewyke* in common with Auchinleck | **BL Egerton MS 1995** | **CUL MS Ff.2.38** (olim no. 690). Late 15th century. Ff.2.38 also has in common with Auchinleck: *A Peniworþ of Witt, Beues of Hamtoun, Guy of Warwick* (different redaction) and *Sir Degare* | **Balliol College Oxford MS 354**. 15th-16th century. B-redaction: **CUL Dd.1.17**. C-redaction: **Bodleian Library MS 14667** | **Cotton Galba E.ix**. D-redaction: **NLS MS. 16500 (Asloan)** | **Edinburgh U.L. I.481** | **Edinburgh U.L. I.521**.	H. W. Weber, *Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries,* 3 vols, Edinburgh: Constable, 1810 | F. J. Furnivall, E. Brock and W. A. Clouston, *Originals and Analogues of Some of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, Chaucer Society, Second Series,* 7, 10, 15, 20, 22, London: Trübner, 1872-87 | Hermann Varnhagen, 'über eine unbekannte schottische Bearbeitung der Sieben Weisen', *Englische Studien*, 25 (1898), pp. 321-5; 322-4 | K. Brunner, *The Seven Sages of Rome*, EETS OS 191, London: Humphrey Milford for Oxford University Press, 1933. ***IMEV 3187 | DIMEV 4984***
19 (26)	**Floris and Blancheflour**	**CUL MS Gg.4.27.2**. c.1300. S. W. Midland. 824 lines | **BL Egerton MS 2862** (olim Trentham-Sutherland). Late 14th century. Suffolk. 1083 lines. Egerton also has in common with Auchinleck: *King Richard, Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Sir Degare* and *Floris and Blauncheflour* | **BL Cotton Vitellius MS D.3**. Before 1300. Fragment (451 lines, many imperfect).	Charles Henry Hartshorne, *Ancient Metrical Tales,* London: W. Pickering, 1829 | D. Laing, *A Penni Worth of Witte, Abbotsford Club*, Edinburgh, 1857 | A. B. Taylor, *Floris and Blancheflour: A Middle-English Romance*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1927 | M. M. Pelan, *Floire et Blancheflor: Édition Critique avec Commentaire, Textes d'Étude 7*, Paris: Université de Strasbourg, 1937 | F. C. de Vries, *Floris and Blauncheflur*, Gröningen: Druk, 1966 | Sisam, Celia, and Kenneth Sisam, *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse,* Oxford: Clarendon, 1970, pp. 68-73 (extracts) | M. M. Pelan, *Floire et Blancheflor: Seconde Version, Édition du MS 1447 du Fonds Français avec Notes, Variantes et Glossaire*, Paris: Éditions Ophrys, 1975 | *Sentimental and Humorous Romances* edited by Eric Kooper, Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University for TEAMS, 2006. ***IMEV *45 | DIMEV 3686***
20 (26)	**The Sayings of the Four Philosophers**	**Cambridge St John's College E.9 (112)**	D. Laing, *Owain Miles*, Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1837 | T. Wright, *The Political Songs of England*, London: Nichols, 1839. Re-issued by P. R. Coss (ed. and intro.), *Thomas Wright's Political Songs of England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 | George Perkins Marsh, *Origin and History of the English Language,* New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1866 | A. J. Ellis, *On Early English Pronunciation, Chaucer Society, Second Series, 4*, London: Trübner, 1869 | R. P. Wülcker, *Altenglisches Lesebuch*, Halle: Niemeyer, 1874-80 | S. J. H. Herrtage, *The Early English Versions of the Gesta Romanorum*, EETS ES 33, London: Trübner, 1879 | T. Vätke, 'Lied auf den Bruch der Magna Charta durch Edward II', *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Spachen und Litteraturen*, 72 (1884), pp. 467-469 | G. Holmstedt, *Speculum Christiani*, EETS OS 182, London: Oxford University Press, 1933 | R. H. Robbins, *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1959 | Celia Sisam, Sisam Kenneth, *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse,* Oxford: Clarendon, 1970. ***IMEV 1857 | DIMEV 3046***
21 (27)	**The Battle Abbey Roll**		H. M. Smyser, 'The list of Norman Names in the Auchinleck MS' in *Mediaeval Studies in Honor of J. D. M. Ford*, edited by U. T. Holmes and A. J. Denomy, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948, pp. 257-87.
22 (28)	**Guy of Warwick (couplets)**	A-redaction: **Caius Cambridge MS 107/176**. c.1400. S. E. Midland | **BL Sloane MS 1044**. Midland with Western features. Mid-late 14th century. Single-folio fragment. 216 lines. Earlier, Northern couplet redaction: **NLW MS Binding Fragments 578** and **BL Additional MS 14408**. Early 14th century. Fragmentary. Later couplet redaction: **CUL MS Ff.2.38** (olim no. 690). Late 15th century. Ff.2.38 also has in common with Auchinleck: *A Penniworþ of Witt, Beues of Hamtoun, The Seven Sages of Rome* and *Sir Degare*.	W. B. Turnbull, David Donald, *The Romances of Sir Guy of Warwick, and Rembrun his Son,* Abbotsford Club 18, Edinburgh, 1840 | Zupitza, *Guy of Warwick*, EETS ES 42, 49, 59, London: Trübner, 1883-91 | A. Ewert, *Gui de Warewic: Roman du XIIIe Siecle,* 2 vols, Paris: Champion, 1932, 1933 | M. Mills and D. Huws, *Fragments of an Early Fourteenth-Century 'Guy of Warwick', Medium Ævum Monographs New Series IV,* Oxford: Blackwell, 1974 | A. Wiggins, 'Guy of Warwick: Study and Transcription', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Sheffield (2000). ***IMEV 3145 | DIMEV 4907***

Item No	Title	Other Manuscripts	Editions
23 (28)	**Guy of Warwick (stanzas)**	Unique copy	W. B. Turnbull, David Donald, *The Romances of Sir Guy of Warwick, and Rembrun his Son,* Abbotsford Club 18, Edinburgh: 1840 | J. Zupitza, *Guy of Warwick*, EETS ES 42, 49, 59, London: Trübner, 1883-91 | Stanzaic Guy of Warwick edited by Allison Wiggins, Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University for TEAMS, 2004. ***IMEV 946 | DIMEV 1557***
24 (29)	**Reinbroun**	Unique copy	W. B. Turnbull, David Donald, *The Romances of Sir Guy of Warwick, and Rembrun his Son,* Abbotsford Club 18, Edinburgh: 1840 | J. Zupitza, Guy of Warwick, EETS ES 42, 49, 59, London: Trübner, 1883-91. ***IMEV 1754 | DIMEV 2907***
25 (30)	**Sir Beues of Hamtoun**	Same redaction as Auchinleck: **BL Egerton MS 2862** (olim Trentham-Sutherland). Late 14th century. Suffolk. Egerton also has in common with Auchinleck: *King Richard, Sir Degare, Floris and Blancheflour* and *Amis and Amiloun* | **CUL MS Ff.2.38** (olim no. 690). Late 15th century. Ff.2.38 also has in common with Auchinleck: *A Penniworþ of Witt, The Seven Sages of Rome, Guy of Warwick* (different version) and *Sir Degare* | **Caius Cambridge MS 175**. 1400-1450. S. E. Midlands. The Caius MS also has in common with Auchinleck: *King Richard* and *Seynt Katerine* | **Naples, Royal Library MS XIII.B.29**. c.1457. Other versions: **Trinity College Cambridge MS 0.2.13/IV** (James's no. 1117). Late 15th century. Fragment | **Chetham's Library MS 8009**. Late 15th century. E. Midlands.	W. B. Turnbull, David Donald, *Sir Beves of Hamtoun,* Maitland Club 44, Edinburgh, 1838 | Thomas Wright, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, *Reliquiae Antiquae.* 2 vols, London: Smith, 1845 (extracts) | E. Kölbing, *Beues of Hamtoun*, EETS ES 46, 48, 65, London: Trübner, 1885, 1886, 1894 | J. Fellows, 'Bevis of Hamtoun: Study and Edition', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge (1979) | Ronald B. Hertzman, Graham Drake, Eve Salisbury, *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston,* Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University for TEAMS, 1999. ***IMEV 1993 | DIMEV 3250***
26 (31)	**Of Arthour & of Merlin**	**BL Harley MS 6223** (transcript of the opening 62 lines by John Stow – late 15th century) | **Bodleian Library MS 21698** (Douce 124). Manuscripts of distinct textual affiliation from the Auchinleck: **Lincoln's Inn Library, Hale MS 150**. Text corresponds to lines 1-1902 of Auchinleck. Shropshire. c.1450. The Lincoln's MS also contains a version of *Kyng Alisaunder*. | **Bodleian Library MS 21880** (Douce 236). Dorset. Late 15th century. Text corresponds to lines 28-1834 of Auchinleck. | **BL Additional MS 27879** (Percy Folio). 17th century (c.1650). Lancashire. Text corresponds to lines 1-2160 of Auchinleck. The Percy Folio also has *Sir Degare* in common with Auchinleck.	W. B. D. D. Turnbull, *Arthour and Merlin, A Metrical Romance*, Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing Company, 1838 | E. Kölbing, *Arthour and Merlin, Altenglische Bibliothek, 4*, Leipzig: Reisland, 1890 | O. D. Macrae-Gibson, *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, EETS OS 268, 279, London: Oxford University Press, 1973, 1979. ***IMEV 1675 | DIMEV 2807***
27	**þe Wenche þat Loved þe King**		E. Kölbing, 'Kleine Publicationen aus der Auchinleck-hs', *Englische Studien*, 7 (1884), p. 187. ***IMEV 1614 | DIMEV 2705***
28 (33)	**A Peniworþ of Witt**	Unique copy	D. Laing, *A Penni Worth of Witte*, Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh, 1857 | E. Kölbing, 'Kleine Publicationen aus der Auchinleck-hs', *Englische Studien*, 7 (1884), pp. 111-25. ***IMEV *46 | DIMEV 4123***
29 (34)	**How Our Lady's Sauter was First Found**	**Bodleian Library MS 1687** (Digby 86). c.1275. Digby 86 also has in common with Auchinleck: *The Harrowing of Hell, The Sayings of St Bernard* and *The Thrush and the Nightingale* | **Bodleian Library MS 1485** (Laud lat.95).	D. Laing, *A Penni Worth of Witte*, Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh, 1857 | C. Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden, Neue Folge*, Heilbronn: Henninger, 1881 | Arthur S. Napier, 'Odds and Ends.' *Modern Language Notes* 4 (1889), pp. 137-40; 137; 275-6 | Frederick J. Furnivall, *The Minor Poems of the Vernon Manuscript*, Part 2. EETS OS 117, 1901. ***IMEV 1840 | DIMEV 3030***

Item No	Title	Other Manuscripts	Editions
30 (35)	**Lay le Freine**	Unique copy	H. W. Weber, *Metrical Romances,* 3 vols, Edinburgh: Constable, 1810 | Francis J. Child, *English and Scottish Ballads,* vol 4 Boston: Houghton, Osgood, also Little, Brown, 1857-58 | H. Varnhagen, 'Zu Mittelenglischen Gedichten: VIII, Lay le Freine', *Anglia*, 3 (1880), pp. 415-425 | Gabrielle Guillaume, 'Lai le Freine.' PhD. Dissertation, Sorbonne, 1922 | M. Wattie, *The Middle English Lai le Freine, Smith College Studies in Modern Languages,* vol 10/3, Northampton: Smithe College, 1928 | Donald B. Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances,* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966 | Alexandra Barratt, *Women's Writing in Middle English,* London: Longman, 1992 | A. Laskaya and E. Salisbury, *The Middle English Breton Lays*, Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University for TEAMS, 1995. ***IMEV 3869 | DIMEV 3173***
31 (36)	**Roland and Vernagu**	Unique copy	W. B. Turnbull, David Donald, *The Romances of Rouland and Vernagu, and Otuel from the Auchinleck Manuscript,* Abbotsford Club 4, Edinburgh, 1836 | S. J. H. Herrtage, *The Taill of Rauf Coilyear ... with the Fragments of Roland and Vernagu and Otuel, The English Charlemagne Romances 6*, EETS ES 39, London: Trübner, 1882. ***IMEV *28 | DIMEV 1353***
32 (37)	**Otuel a Kniȝt**	Unique copy	W. B. Turnbull, David Donald, *The Romances of Rouland and Vernagu, and Otuel from the Auchinleck Manuscript,* Abbotsford Club 4, Edinburgh, 1836 | S. J. H. Herrtage, *The Taill of Rauf Coilyear ... with Fragments of Roland and Vernagu and Otuel, The English Charlemagne Romances 6*, EETS ES 39, London: Trübner, 1882. ***IMEV 1103 | DIMEV 1784***
33 (44)	**Kyng Alisaunder**	**Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc 622** (formerly Laud I.74). S. E. Midland. c.1400. Fullest text (of 8021 lines) | **London, Lincoln's Inn MS 150**. W. Midlands, Shropshire. Late 14th (Kyng Alisaunder) and 15th centuries. 6746 lines. The Lincoln's MS also contains a version of *Arthour and of Merlin*.	W. B. Turnbull, David Donald, *The Romances of Rouland and Vernagu, and Otuel from the Auchinleck Manuscript,* Abbotsford Club 4, Edinburgh, 1836 | Alois Leonhard Brandl, *Mittelenglische Sprach- und Literatureproben. 2nd ed.*, Berlin, 1917 | G. V. Smithers, *Kyng Alisaunder*, EETS OS 227, 237, London: Oxford University Press, 1951, 1957| G. V. Smithers, 'Two Newly-Discovered Fragments from the Auchinleck MS', *Medium Ævum*, 18 (1949), pp. 1-11 | G. V. Smithers, 'Another Fragment of the Auchinleck MS' in *Medieval Literature and Civilization: Studies in Memory of G. N. Garmonsway*, edited by D. A. Pearsall and R. A. Waldron, London: Athlone Press, 1969, pp. 192-210. ***IMEV 683 | DIMEV 1131***
34	**The Thrush and the Nightingale**	**Bodleian Library MS 1687** (Digby 86). S. W. Midlands. c.1275. Digby 86 also has in common with Auchinleck: *The Harrowing of Hell, The Sayings of St Bernard* and *How Our Lady's Sauter was First Found*.	D. Laing, *A Penni Worth of Witte*, Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh, 1857 | H. Varnhagen, 'Zu Mittelenglischen Gedichten', *Anglia*, 4 (1881), pp- 180-210. | F. Holthausen, 'Die Mittelenglische Streit Zwischen Drossel und Nachtigall', *Anglia*, 43 (1919), pp. 52-59. (Critical edition). ***IMEV 3222 | DIMEV 5052***
35	**The Sayings of St Bernard**	The Auchinleck text contains lines 121-32 and 157-80 of the text in **Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 108** (SC 1486). c.1275-1325. Laud 108 also has *Þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi and þe Soule* in common with Auchinleck | **Bodleian Library MS 1687** (Digby 86). Digby also has in common with Auchinleck: *The Harrowing of Hell, How Our Lady's Sauter was First Found,* and *The Thrush and the Nightingale* | **Bodleian Library MS 30314** (Additional E.6(a)) | **BL Harley 2253**. W. Midlands (Ludlow). c.1310. Harley also has in common with Auchinleck: *The Harrowing of Hell* and *The Alphabetical Praise of Women.* | **Bodleian Library MS 3938** (Bodl. poet A.1) (Vernon). W. Midlands. Late 14th or early 15th century. Vernon also has in common with Auchinleck: *The Legend of Pope Gregory, Þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi and þe Soule,* and *The King of Tars*.	D. Laing, *A Penni Worth of Witte*, Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh, 1857 | H. Varnhagen, 'Zu Mittelenglischen Gedichten', *Anglia*, 3 (1880), pp. 275-292. ***IMEV 3310; 2865 | DIMEV 5215; 4564***

Item No	Title	Other Manuscripts	Editions
36	**Dauid þe King**	Oldest version of this text	D. Laing, *A Penni Worth of Witte*, Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh, 1857 | E. Kölbing, 'Kleine Publicationen aus der Auchinleck-hs', *Englische Studien*, 9 (1886), pp. 49-50. ***IMEV 1956 | DIMEV 3201***
37 (51)	**Sir Tristrem**	Unique Copy	W. Scott, *Sir Tristrem*, Edinburgh: Constable, 1804 | E. Kölbing, *Die Nordische und die Englische Version der Tristan-Sage,* 2 vols, Heilbronn: Henninger, 1878-82 | G. P. McNeill, *Sir Tristrem, Scottish Text Society 8,* Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1886 | George Eyre-Todd, *Early Scottish Poetry,* Glasgow: W. Hodge, 1891 | *Lancelot of the Laik and Sir Tristrem* edited by Alan Lupack, Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University for TEAMS, 1994. ***IMEV 1382 | DIMEV 2305***
38	**Sir Orfeo**	**BL Harley MS 3810**. Early 15th century. Warwickshire? Complete text of 509 lines including prologue | **Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 61**. Late 15th century. N. E. Midlands. Complete text of 603 lines.	D. Laing, *Selected Remains of Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland*, Edinburgh: Printed for Wm. & D. Laing by Balfour and Clarke, 1821-22. Revised by W. C. Hazlitt, *Early Popular Poetry of Scotland*, London: Reeves and Turner, 1895 | O. Zielke, *Sir Orfeo*, Breslau: Koebner, 1880 | M. Shackford, *Legends and Satires,* Boston: Ginn and Co, 1913 | A. S. Cook, *A Literary Middle English Reader*, Boston: Ginn and Co, 1915 | K. Sisam, *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1921 | W. H. French and C. B. Hale, *Middle English Metrical Romances*, New York: Prentice-Hall, 1930 | A. J. Bliss, *Sir Orfeo, Second Edition,* Oxford: Clarendon, 1966, B. Ford, *The Age of Chaucer (With an Anothology of Medieval Poems)*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969 | Robert D. Stevick, *Five Middle English Narratives,* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967 | Celia Sisam, Kenneth Sisam, *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse,* Oxford: Clarendon, 1970 | A. C. Spearing, J. E. Spearing. *Poetry of the Age of Chaucer,* London: Edward Arnold, 1974 | D. B. Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1986 | A. Laskaya and E. Salisbury, *The Middle English Breton Lays*, Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University for TEAMS, 1995. ***IMEV 3868 | DIMEV 6172***
39 (52)	**The Four Foes of Mankind**	Unique copy	D. Laing, *Owain Miles*, Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1837 | E. Kölbing, 'Kleine Publicationen aus der Auchinleck-hs: VIII, Die Feinde des Menschen', *Englische Studien*, 9 (1886), pp. 441-442 | C. Bullock, 'The Enemies of Man', *Review of English Studies*, 5 (1929), pp. 186-194 | C. Carleton-Brown, *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1924. ***IMEV 3462 | DIMEV 5460***
40 (53)	**The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle**	A-redaction: **BL Royal MS 12.c.xii**. 1320-40. W. Midlands. B-redaction: **CUL MS Ff.5.48**. 15th century. W. Midlands. Writen by Gilbert Pilkington. C-redaction (Auchinleck): **BL Additional MS 19677**. 1390-1400. | **CUL Dd.14.2**. 15th century, completed before 1432. | **Bodleian Library MS 15432** (Rawlinson poet. 145). First half of the 14th century | **BL Cotton Caligula A.ix**. Single leaf. First half of the 14th century. olim Philipps (Sotheby Sale Cat., June 29, 1936, Lot 105). Present owner unknown. Related MS: **CUL Gg.I.1**. Translation of the Chronicle into Anglo-Norman prose, early 14th century.	M. C. Carroll and R. Tuve, 'Two Manuscripts of the Middle English Anonymous Riming Chronicle', *PMLA*, 46 (1931), pp. 115-154. | E. Zettl, *An Anomymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, EETS OS 196, London: Oxford University Press, 1935 (With all variants). ***IMEV 1105 | DIMEV 1786***

Item No	Title	Other Manuscripts	Editions
41 (54)	**Horn Childe & Maiden Rimnild**	Unique copy	J. Ritson, *Ancient English Metrical Romances,* 3 vols, London, 1802 | F. Michel, *Horn et Rimenhild*, Paris: Bannatyne Club, 1845 | J. Caro, 'Kleine Publications aus der Auchinleck-hs: X, Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild', *Englische Studien*, 12 (1889), pp. 324-366 | J. Hall, *King Horn*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1901 | M. Mills, *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild, Middle English Texts 20*, Heidelberg: Winter, 1988. ***IMEV 2253 | DIMEV 3622***
42 (55)	**Alphabetical Praise of Women**	Unique copy	J. Leydon, *The Complaynt of Scotland*, Edinburgh: Constable, 1801 | D. Laing, *A Penni Worth of Witte*, Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh, 1857 | E. Kölbing, 'Kleine Publicationen aus der Auchinleck-hs', *Englische Studien*, 7 (1884), pp. 101-110 | F. Holthausen, 'Die Quelle des Mittelenglischen Gedichtes "Lob der Frauen"', *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Litteraturen*, 108 (1902), pp. 288-301. ***IMEV *20 | DIMEV 901***
43 (56)	**King Richard**	A-redaction: **Caius Cambridge MS 175**. 1400-1450. Caius also has in common with Auchinleck: *Seynt Katerine* and *Beues of Hamtoun* | **BL Additional MS 31042** (Fillingham). 1425-50. B-redaction (Auchinleck): **BL Egerton MS 2862** (olim Trentham-Sutherland). Late 14th century. Suffolk. Egerton also has in common with Auchinleck: *Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Sir Degare, Floris and Blancheflour* and *Amis and Amiloun* | **London, College of Arms, HDN 58** (olim Arundel). c.1448.| **Bodleian Library MS 21802** (Douce 228). Late 15th century | **BL Harley MS 4690**. 1450-1500.	D. Laing and W. B. D. D. Turnbull, *Owain Miles*, Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1837 | E. Kölbing, 'Kleine Publicationen aus der Auchinleck-hs', *Englische Studien*, 8 (1885), pp. 115-9 | G. Paris, 'Le Roman de Richard Coeur de Lion', *Romania*, 26 (1897), pp. 353-93 | K. Brunner, *Richard Löwenherz, Wiener Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie, 42,* Vienna and Leipzig: W. Braumller, 1913 | G. V. Smithers, 'Two Newly-Discovered Fragments from the Auchinleck Manuscript', *Medium Ævum*, 18 (1949), pp. 1-11. ***IMEV 1979 | DIMEV 3231***
44	**þe Simonie**	The Auchinleck text is a unique copy of the A-redaction. B-redaction: **Bodleian Library MS 48** (formerly MS 18885). Second quarter of the 15th century. C-redaction: **Cambridge Peterhouse MS 104**. Last quarter of the 14th or first quarter of the 15th century.	Thomas Wright, *The Political Songs of England,* Camden Society OS 6, 1839 | C. Hardwick, *A Poem on the Times of Edward II*, Percy Society 28/2, London: Richards, 1849 | Paul Meyer, 'Mélanges de poésie anglo-normande', *Romania*, 4 (1875), pp. 370-97 | E. Kölbing, 'Vier Romanzen-handschriften', *Englische Studien*, 7 (1884), pp. 177-201| T. W. Ross, *A Satire on Edward II's England*, Colorado College Studies 8, Colorado Springs: The Research Committee, Colorado College, 1966 | D. Embree and E. Urquhart, *The Simonie: A Parallel-Text Edition, Middle English Texts 24*, Heidelberg: Winter, 1991. ***IMEV 4165 | DIMEV 6677***

Appendix 4 – Metre [1]

Item Number	Title	Language	Scribe	Rhyming scheme
1 (6)	The Legend of Pope Gregory	Middle English	scribe 1	8-line stanzas. Irregular rhyme scheme: predominantly abababab but some stanzas rhyme ababcbcb, ababacac and ababcdcd
2 (7)	**The King of Tars**	**Middle English**	**scribe 1**	**12-line tail-rhyme stanza, rhyming aabaabccbddb**
3 (8)	The Life of Adam and Eve	Middle English	scribe 1	Short couplets
4 (9)	Seynt Mergrete	Middle English	scribe 1	The poem is versified in monorhymed, long-lined quatrains, although the layout of the manuscript resembles 8-line stanzas.
5 (10)	Seynt Katerine	Middle English	scribe 1	The poem is versified in monorhymed, long-lined quatrains, although the layout of the manuscript resembles 8-line stanzas.
6 (11)	**St Patrick's Purgatory**	**Middle English**	**scribe 1**	**6-line tail-rhyme stanzas, rhyming aabccb**
7 (12)	þe Desputisoun Bitven þe Bodi & þe Soule	Middle English + Latin (only labels)	scribe 1	8-line stanzas, rhyming abababab
8 (13)	The Harrowing of Hell	Middle English + Latin (only labels)	scribe 1	Short couplets
9 (14)	The Clerk who would see the Virgin	Middle English	scribe 1	12-line stanzas, rhyming ababababcdcd.
10 (15)	Speculum Gy de Warewyke	Middle English + Latin (17 lines)	scribe 2	Short couplets
11 (16)	**Amis and Amiloun**	**Middle English**	**scribe 1**	**12-line tail-rhyme stanzas rhyming aabaabccbddb. Four-stress iambic couplets alternating with one iambic three-stress line.**
12 (17)	The Life of St Mary Magdalene	Middle English	scribe 1	Short couplets
13 (17)	The Nativity and Early Life of Mary	Middle English	scribe 1	Long-line couplets, written as quatrains, but marked by paraphs as eight-line stanzas in the MS
14 (21)	On the Seven Deadly Sins	Middle English	scribe 3	Short couplets
15 (22)	The Paternoster	Middle English + Latin (8 lines)	scribe 3	Short couplets
16 (23)	**The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin**	**Middle English**	**scribe 3**	**6-line tail-rhyme stanzas rhyming aabccb**
17 (24)	Sir Degare	Middle English	scribe 3	Short couplets
18 (25)	The Seven Sages of Rome	Middle English	scribe 3	Short couplets
19 (26)	Floris and Blancheflour	Middle English	scribe 3	Short couplets. Three- or four- stress lines
20 (26)	The Sayings of the Four Philosophers	Middle English + 10 lines in macaronic English-French	scribe 2	Macaronic lines 1-16 in 8-line stanzas, rhyming abababab; lines 17-20 in 4-line stanza, rhyming abab; remainder Middle English lines in 12-line stanzas, rhyming aabaabcccddd
21 (27)	The Battle Abbey Roll	List of names	scribe 4	
22 (28)	Guy of Warwick (couplets)	Middle English	scribe 1	Short couplets.

[1] Poems in tail-rhyme are marked in bold

Item Number	Title	Language	Scribe	Rhyming scheme
23 (28)	**Guy of Warwick (stanzas)**	**Middle English**	**scribe 1**	**12-line tail-rhyme stanzas rhyming aabaabccbddb to line 624 (line 7547 of the present text); thereafter rhyming aabccbddbeeb except for about 10 stanzas scattered through the text.**
24 (29)	**Reinbroun**	**Middle English**	**scribe 5**	**12-line tail-rhyme stanzas rhyming predominantly aabccbddbeeb; about 18 stanzas scattered throughout rhyming aabaabccbddb.**
25 (30)	**Sir Beues of Hamtoun**	**Middle English**	**scribe 5**	**Lines 1-474 in 6-line tail-rhyme stanzas rhyming aabccb; remainder in short couplets.**
26 (31)	Of Arthour & of Merlin	Middle English	scribe 1	Short couplets
27	þe Wenche þat Loved þe King	Middle English	scribe 1	Only two extant lines
28 (33)	A Peniworþ of Witt	Middle English	scribe 1	Short couplets.
29 (34)	**How Our Lady's Sauter was First Found**	**Middle English**	**scribe 1**	**6-line tail-rhyme stanzas, rhyming aabaab**
30 (35)	Lay le Freine	Middle English	scribe 1	Short couplets
31 (36)	**Roland and Vernagu**	**Middle English**	**scribe 1**	**12-line tail-rhyme stanzas, rhyming aabccbddbeeb.**
32 (37)	Otuel a Kniȝt	Middle English	scribe 6	Short couplets
33 (44)	Kyng Alisaunder	Middle English	scribe 1	Short couplets.
34	**The Thrush and the Nightingale**	**Middle English**	**scribe 1**	**6-line tail-rhyme stanzas, rhyming aabccb.**
35	**The Sayings of St Bernard**	**Middle English**	**scribe 1**	**6-line tail-rhyme stanzas, rhyming aabccb**
36	Dauid þe King	Middle English + Latin (20 lines)	scribe 1	Short couplets
37 (51)	Sir Tristrem	Middle English	scribe 1	11-line stanzas, rhyming ababababcbc. Ninth line is a single-stress bob which the copyist places in various positions.
38	Sir Orfeo	Middle English	scribe 1	Short couplets
39 (52)	**The Four Foes of Mankind**	**Middle English**	**scribe 1**	**16-line tail-rhyme stanzas, rhyming aaabcccbdddbeeeb. Markedly alliterative.**
40 (53)	The Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle	Middle English + French (7 lines)	scribe 1	Short couplets
41 (54)	**Horn Childe & Maiden Rimnild**	**Middle English**	**scribe 1**	**12-line tail-rhyme stanzas, rhyming aabaabccbddb**
42 (55)	Alphabetical Praise of Women	Middle English	scribe 1	11-line stanzas of which the ninth line is single-stress (cf. Sir Tristrem; rhymes ababababcdc).
43 (56)	**King Richard**	**Middle English**	**scribe 1**	**Lines 1-24 in 12-line- tail-rhyme stanzas, rhyming aabaabccbddb; remainder in short couplets**
44	þe Simonie	Middle English	scribe 2	6-line stanzas of four long lines, a bob and one long line, rhyming aabbcc.

Appendix 5 – Two Roughly Contemporary Versions of the *Liber Regum Angliae*

The following synoptic table compares the Auchinleck *Chronicle* with the roughly contemporary version of the *Liber Regum Angliae* as contained in London, British Library, Royal MS 12 C XII. Although these are not the sole extant versions of this text dating back to the beginning of the fourteenth century, they are certainly the most relevant to the current study. The only other contemporary version is in fact the Anglo-Norman prose chronicle contained in Cambridge, Cambridge University Library Gg.I.1. Nevertheless, given its reduced length, translatory nature and prose arrangement, it has only marginally been considered in Chapter 2 for the analysis of specific passages.[1] Since the chronicle contained in Royal MS 12 C XII is considered the closest to the original text, its comparison with the Auchinleck version might reveal the extent to which the Auchinleck redactor reworked his source text in order to comply with his own agenda. Significantly, although the manuscript held at the British Library is a customarily miscellaneous collection of texts in Latin, Anglo-Norman and Middle English ranging from hagiographical and scientific treatises to culinary recipes, it also contains a chronicle (the *Liber Regum Angliae*), political and satirical texts, as well as two romances in Anglo-Norman (*Fulk le Fitz Warin* and *Amys and Amylion*). As for the political material, it might be worth mentioning an office in honour of Thomas of Lancaster, whose tragic fate might also have been alluded to in the satirical poems of the Auchinleck collection. For the purpose of the current study the chronicle has been transcribed from the original digitised manuscript available on the British Library website,[2] whereas the edition of the Auchinleck *Chronicle* is taken from the online edition by David Burnley and Alison Wiggins.[3] For the subsequent semi-diplomatic transcription of Royal MS 12 C XII abbreviations have been marked in *italics*, any correction or superscription as well as two displaced lines (ll. 651-2) have been marked in [brackets]. Superscript letters stand for the decorated capitals, whereas '¶' marks the original text indentation.

[1] *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, p. xxxii.
[2] 'Detailed Record for Royal MS 12 C XII', *British Library – Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_12_c_xii_fs001r [accessed on 05/01/2022]
[3] *The Auchinleck Manuscript,* edited by D. Burnley and A. Wiggins, *https://auchinleck.nls.uk/* [accessed on 05/01/2022]

	British Library, Royal MS 12 C XII		**National Library of Scotland, Adv MS 19.2.1**
			Here may men rede whoso can [**fol. 304ra**]
			Hou Jnglond first bigan.
			Men mow it finde jn Englische
			As þe Brout it telleþ, ywis.
	[H]**H**erkeneþ hiderward Lordinges [**fol. 62ra**]	5	Herkeneþ hiderward lordinges,
	ȝe þat wolleþ here of kinges		ȝe þat wil here of kinges,
	And ȝe mowen heren anon		Ichil ȝou tellen as y can
	Hou engelonde furst bigon		Hou Jnglond first bigan.
5	Þis philosofres us doþ to wyte		
	Ase we findeþ ywryte		
	¶ Þis lond wes cleped Albyon		
			Sitteþ stille grete & smale
		10	& ȝe schal here a wel fair tale.
			A king þer was in heþen lond,
			Of Grece he was ich vnderstond.
			He was a swiþe noble kniȝt,
			Duhti man he was in fiȝt,
		15	Riȝt stalworþ & strong:
			Þe best bodi jn ani lond.
			In þat time þat was yfounde
			His enemis al he brouȝt to grounde;
			Man he was of grete nobleye.
		20	A wiif he hadde soþ to say,
			A riȝt swiþe feir quen,
			Non feirer no miȝt ben.
			Children he wan on hir tventi,
			Al maiden childer witterly,
		25	Feir of siȝt on to se,
			Þe feirest maidens of þat cuntre.
			When þe maidens wer of age
			Þai wer ȝeuen to mariage
			To hem þat wer of gret honour.
		30	Noiþer to king no to emperour,
			Al þai were maride wel,
			Als to swiche wimen bifel.
			¶ Afterward sone anon
			Þeldest soster of euerichon -
		35	Hir name forsoþe hiȝt Albin -
			Sche hir biþouȝt in iuel tim
			Of tresoun al for to do,
			Hou sche miȝt hir lord slo.
			Þe deuel jnto hir hert aliȝt
		40	& consey[l]d hir anonriȝt
			After hir sostren for to sende
			& tel hem alle ord & ende
			Hou sche hadde yþouȝt to do,
			Hir lord wiþ tresoun for to slo.
		45	¶ A messanger sche cleped anon [**fol. 304rb**]
			& bad him swiþe he schuld gon
			To hir sostren al bidene,
			Þat wer wimen briȝt & schene,
			& to hem al for to say
		50	Þat þai come at a certeyn day
			To hir, al wiþ hir to speke.
			Wiþ tresoun þat wold ben awreke

Of hir lord curteys & fre
Þe fairest kniȝt þat miȝt be.
55 Þe messanger him went anon
To hir sustren euerichon
& his message he gan telle
As to a messanger bifelle.
Hir sustren han her way ynome,
60 Sone to Albin þai ben ycome;
Þo þai com toforn hir alle
& were asembled in þe halle
Albin þan to hem seyd,
'Sostren' sche seyd 'ich am bitreyd,
65 Mi lord me holdeþ so in eye
Þat y dar nouȝt oȝain hi[m] say
Word no half in halle no bour.
Þat is to me gret desanour,
Þerfor ichil awreken be
70 Of him when ich mi time se.'
¶ At þat word þai spoken alle
Anon toforn hir in þe halle
& seyden al by & by,
'So fare we al witterly.
75 Of hem we haue miche grame
To ous al it is gret schame
For we ben al of heye parage
& ycomen of heye linage.'
¶ Albin hem answerd anon,
80 'Sostren, wite ȝe what we schul don?
Wele schul we awreken be
ȝif ȝe wil don after me;
ȝe schul me pliȝten al ȝour fay
Þat ȝe schal don as y ȝo[u] say
85 Þis ich day a seuen niȝt.
Lokeþ wele bi al ȝour miȝt
ȝour lordes to maken glad chere
Al þat day as nouȝt no were.
At euen lokeþ sone & swiþe [**fol. 304va**]
90 Þat ich of ȝou haue a kniue,
& when þat ȝe schul go to rest
Loke þat ȝe be redy & prest
& to þe hert swiþe hem smite
Þat neuer man þerof no wite.
95 & afterward wel priueliche
Bidelue hem in a foule diche;
Þan may we liue in gret anour
& maisters ben & comandour,
Erliche & late, loude & stille,
100 Euerich man to don our wille.'
¶ When þis wordes weren yseyd
Al þerwiþ þai weren ypeyd
& seyden al wiþouten fayl
Þat þis was a gode conseyl
105 & after her rede þai wald do
Her hosbondes al for to slo.
Ac þe ȝinges[t] of hem euerichon
Þouȝt sche nold nouȝt so don,

		Hir lord to slen wiþ trecherie;
	110	Arst sche þouȝt hem al biwreye
		Ar sche wald do þat wicke dede.
		'Crist' sche seyd, 'it forbede
		Mi lord ani tresoun do;
		Crist nold neuer it wer so.'
	115	Hir lord þat was a ȝongling
		Sche loued mest of al þing
		Also schuld ich gode wiman -
		Ac mani on so do no can.
		Þe sustren al wenten home
	120	Vnto her stedes þat þai come
		& þouȝtten al haue don þat dede
		Þurth trecherie & þurth falshede.
		Þe ȝong soster, when sche hom cam,
		Anon hir lord warn sche gan
	125	& told him of þat foule meschaunce
		& of þat wicked puruiaunce
		Þat hir sostren had made.
		Þerfore in hert sche was vnglade.
		¶ 'Leman' sche seyd 'hende & fre,
	130	Of o þing ichil warn þe:
		Mine sostren al þurth wicked rede
		Han ordeyned an iuel dede
		Her lordes al to bring of dawe, [**fol. 304vb**]
		Oȝaines riȝt, oȝaines lawe,
	135	& eren men of gret anour;
		It were a foule mesauentour.
		God þat heyest sitt of alle
		No lat it neuer so bifalle.'
		'Leman' he seyd 'may þis be soþ?'
	140	'ȝa, sir, wiþouten oþ.
		Þat schaltow wele wite & se.
		Þe next sonne niȝt þat schal be,
		Þat niȝt schal þe ded be don,
		Þat slayn þai schal ben euerichon;
	145	& for þi loue, dede y schal be
		Þat ichaue wraied her priuete.'
		'Leman' he seyd 'of gret valour,
		Þou schalt be kept wiþ gret anour,
		Erliche & lat, loude & stille,
	150	Þine hertes wil to fulfille.
		Of þis wordes þai leten her pas
		& made togider grete solas
		Wiþ joie & blis al þat niȝt
		What it sprong þe day liȝt.
	155	Amorwe when þe day gan spring
		& þe foules miri sing,
		Þe kniȝt aros anonriȝt
		& atired him, wele apliȝt.
		His steward he gan to him calle
	160	& charged him biforn hem alle
		Þat he schuld wiþ gret anour
		His lef to serue in halle & bour
		Of al þing sche wald craue;
		Rediliche sche schuld it haue.

	165 ¶ 'Sir' he seyd 'bi God almiȝt, Sche schal be serued, wel apliȝt, Of what þing it be her wille, Erliche & lat, loude & stille, As falleþ to wiman of gret anour, 170 Boþe in halle & in bour.' ¶ Þe kniȝt was atired in riche wede & sadeld was his gode stede. He girt him wiþ a gode brond, Into þe sadel sone he wond, 175 & forþeward bigan to ride, Kniȝtes & sweynes bi his side. Al þat day his way he nome [**fol. 305ra**] What he to þe palays come Þat was lord & emperour 180 Þat ȝaf him wiif wiþ grete anour. Atte gates he gan aliȝt & went him in hastiliche, apliȝt; Þurthout þe halle, into þe bour, Þer he fond þat emperour, 185 & hendiliche he him grett. When þai togider mett, 'Sir' seyd þe kniȝt 'in priuete O word ichil speke wiþ þe; Why & wharfor hider ich com 190 Þou schalt it wite son anon.' ¶ Þemperour þo gan vpstond & tok þe kniȝt bi þe hond & wiþ semblant glad & bliþe To chamber lad him also swiþe 195 His message for to here, To wite what his wille were. 'Sir' seyd þe kniȝt 'in priuete, O þing ichil warni þe: Þine douhtern euerichone 200 Han puruayd a foule tresone Her lordes al for to sle. Þe next sonne niȝt þat schal be, Þat niȝt schal þe dede be done, Þat slayn þai schal ben euerichon; 205 Þus þai han her conseyl take Eueriche to slen her make Þurth trecherie & þurth falshed. Þat is a swiþe wicked dede. Þe king answerd 'hou may þis be? 210 Is it soþ þou tel it me?' 'ȝa, sir' he seyd 'bi mi trewþe; Þat is swiþe miche rewþe.' Þe king seyd 'what is best to don?' 'Sir, after þine douhtern send anon; 215 Do hem al bifor þe come To wite þe soþ of þis tresone, & when þai beþ ycomen alle, Þe ȝongest schaltow to þe calle & charge hir in priuete 220 Þat sche þe soþe tel þe

		Of her tresoun & her trecherie, [**fol. 305rb**]
		No word to þe þat sche no lye.’
		Wiþ þat conseyl þe king was peyd
		& dede as þe kniȝt had seyd.
	225	Swiþe he cleped a messanger
		& bad hem go boþe fer & ner
		His douhtern al to warni
		Þat hij come to him hastily,
		Vnto her fader sone anon,
	230	To wite his conseyl & his dom
		O þing þat he wald to hem telle.
		‘Go’ he seyd ‘& nouȝt no duelle.’
		¶ Þe messanger swiþe went
		& dede þe kinges comandment;
	235	Fro toun to toun he ran bliue
		His message he dede swiþe.
		Þo þe sostren euerichon
		Toforn her fader þai comen anon,
		& when þai wer toforn him come
	240	He spac to hem atte frome.
		Þe ȝingest of hem euerichon
		He cleped to him sone anon
		& seyd ‘douhter, y bid þe
		O þing me telle in priuete,
	245	As tow louest þine anour,
		Or þou schalt haue gret deshonour,
		Þou & þine sostren alle,
		Miche schame ȝou schal bifalle,
		Wiþ vile deþ to ben yschent,
	250	Yboiled quic or ben ybrent.’
		On knes swiþe sche gan to falle
		& merci sche crid biforn hem alle.
		‘Sir’ sche seyd wiþ reweful cri,
		‘On me now ȝe haue merci.
	255	Of al þing ichil ben aknowe,
		Toforn boþe heye & lowe,
		Of what þing so it euer bifalle
		Of me & of min sostren alle.’
		Hir fader hir gan vpbreyd
	260	& þis wonder to hir he seyd:
		‘Is it soþ þat ȝe han byþouȝt,
		Þou & þine sostren - leyȝe me nouȝt -
		ȝour lordes al for to sle
		Þis next sonne niȝt schal be,
	265	Wiþ trecherie & wiþ treson? [**fol. 305va**]
		Þe soþe þou tel me anon.’
		‘Sir’ sche seyd ‘ieo vus dy,
		It is soþ witterly.
		Our lordes al we schuld haue slawe
	270	& ybrouȝt of liif dawe.
		[I]t was our conseyl & our rede
		Hem alle haue don to ded.
		Þan schuld we liue in gret anour
		& ich of ous be comandour,
	275	Erliche & late, loud & stille,
		Euerich man to don our wille.’

		When hij was þis word aknowe,
		Biforn hem alle heye & lowe,
		Þemperour ȝaf jugement
	280	Euerichon to ben ybrent;
		Ac for þai were of his linage
		& ycomen of heye parage,
		He comaund swiþe a schip to make,
		Þat it wer redi for her sake,
	285	& his douhtren euerichon
		Swiþe anon þerin to don,
		Wiþouten seyl, wiþouten ore.
		Þerin þai wer don, lasse & more;
		Bot þe ȝingest of hem ichon,
	290	Þilke was bileued at hom.
		Þai wer ystired fro þe lond
		& rode forþ bi þe se strond
		Day & niȝt, wike & oþer,
		Wiþouten seyl, wiþouten roþer.
	295	Þe winde hem drof fer & wide,
		Vp & doun bi euerich side.
		Miche sorwe þai gun to make
		& eueriche wepe for oþer sake.
		Þe winde fast bigan to blowe
	300	& þe wawes vp & doun hem þrowe;
		Sori wimen weren he,
		Adrenched þai wende for to be,
		Ac God þat sitt in heuen-trone
		Al þat he wil it schal be done.
	305	Þus þai riden bi þe strond
		What þai com to þis lond,
		& whan þai gun here ariue
		In hert þai wer glad & bliþe.
		Asclaundred þai were euerichon, [**fol. 305vb**]
	310	Þerfore þai made michel mone.
		¶ Þo bispac þeldest, Albin,
		'Listeneþ sostren þat be min,
		Y schal ȝou telle hou it schal be:
		Þis lond ichil sese to me,
	315	After mi name Albion
		ȝe schullen it clepe euerichon.'
		Opon þis lond þai gun riue
		& gras & rotes gadred bliue,
		Frout & acren to her mete;
	320	Oþer þing miȝt þai non gete.
		Loges swiþe þai gun hem make
		To resten hem in arliche & lat.
		In þat time in al þis lond
		An acre of lond þai ne fond,
	325	Bot wode & wildernisse;
		Þai no fond tilþe more no lesse.
		Ac sone anon after swiþe
		Þai biþouȝten hem bliue
		Hou þai venisoun miȝt take,
	330	Gode mete þerof to make.
		Þai gun to make mani gin
		Þe wilde bestes for to win,

			& so þai dede day & oþer;
			Þermid þai gun hem frouer
		335	& made hem boþe glad & bleþe
			& her hunger gan wele liþe.
			Þai ferd wele þo hem among,
			After lecherie hem gun long,
			& seyd among hem euerichon
		340	Hem failed nouȝt bot mannes mon.
			Þe fende of helle, þat foule wiȝt,
			Amonges hem al þer aliȝt
			& engenderd þo on hem
			Geauntes þat wer strong men,
		345	& of hem come þe geauntes strong
			Þat were byȝeten in þis lond.
			Forsoþe to say, on þis maner
			Were þe geauntes biȝeten here,
			& ȝeres after mani & long
		350	Þai kept þis lond in her hond
			Eyȝte hundred winter, al bidene;
			Þai kept þis lond hem bitvene
			Euer til þat Brut him come, [**fol. 306ra**]
			Þat was filius Brutus sone,
		355	& he forsoþe, wiþouten feyle,
			Ouercom hem al in batayle,
			& þus þis lond hiȝt Albyone.
	Er þen Bruyt from troye com ·		To þat Brut fram Troie come,
	A þousente tuo hondred ȝer		Þat was a þousand & tvo hundred ȝer
10	Er þen Mariei Crist ber	360	Er þan Ihesu Mari bere.
	A muchemon com from t*ro*ye ywis		Þo cam Brutt fram Troye, ywis,
	Wes icleped Bruyt fylius		Þat was filius sone Brutis;
	A muchemon com with hi*m* also ·		Douhti man com wiþ him also,
	Corine*us* yclepud wes þo ·		Þat Cornius was ycleped þo.
15	In þilke time in al þis londe	365	In þat time in al þis lond, ywis,
	On aker lond þer nes yfounde		Nas þer tilþe, more no lesse,
	Ne toun ne houses neuer on ·		Toun no hous neuer non
	Er þen Bruyt from Troye com ·		Er þan Brutt fram Troye com;
	Ah al wes wode & wildernesse		Al was wode & wildernisse,
20	Nes þer no tilþe more ne lesse ·	370	Her no was tilþe, more no lesse.
	Geauntz her wonede swyþe st*ro*nge		Geauntes her woned swiþe strong
	Þat were boþe grete & longe		Þat wer boþe gret & long.
	¶ Geomagog hatte here kyng		Gomagog was her king;
	Me nuste no wer ys euenyng ·		He no hadde non euening.
25	He wes of swyþe wonder st*re*ynþe ·	375	He was of swiþe grete strengþe,
	Ant fourtifiþe hade þe leynþe		Fourti fot he was of lengþe,
	From þe elbowe to þe hond		.xii. fram his helbowe to his hond,
	Ant tuenti on brede on hi*m* me fond		& .xx. on brede men him fond.
	In grete hulles hy woneden her ·		In grete hilles þai woned here
30	Ant liuede by herbes & wilde duer ·	380	& liued bi erbes & bi wilde dere;
	Milk & water hy dronke nout elles		Milke & water þai dronk nouȝt elles,
	Ase þe [Bot] hyt saiþ & telles ·		As þe Broutt ous siggeþ & telleþ.
	Schep he heden ase hors gret		Schepe þai hadde as hors grete
	Þat beren wolle ase her of get		Þat bere wolle so doþ þe gete;
35	Þer of hy maden hem sclauyns	385	Þerof þai made hem sclauines
	Ase palmers þat beþ paynyms		So palmers weren & paynimes.
	¶ Þo Bruyt com þis lond to wynne		Þo (þe) Brutt com þis lond to win
	Þe geaunz þat þer woneden ynne		Þe geauntes þat her wonden in,

	Þo hy horden of Brutes come [**fol. 62rb**]		¶ Þo þai herd of Brutus come,
40	Ham byradden alle & some ·	390	Þai com togider al & some
	To ȝeuen hem bataille anon ·		To ȝiuen hem bateyl anon,
	Ant to slue hem eu*er*ichon ·		& to slen hem euerichon.
	Þe troyens were suyþe kene ·		Brutus folk wer wel kene,
	Ant þat wes þer wel asene		& þat was wonder wele ysene:
45	Þe geaunz heo ouercome	395	Þe geauntes þai ouercome
	Ant heore grete king he nome		& her gret king þai nome,
	Geomagog þat wes so strong		Gomagog þat was so strong [**fol. 306rb**]
	Ant so wonderliche long		& so wonderliche long.
	Corine*us* þe champioun		Cornious þe champioun,
50	Þat wiþ Bruyt from Troye com	400	Þat wiþ Brutt fram Troye com,
	Seh Geomagog so sturne		He seye Co[g]magog so sterne,
	Ant desirede suiþe ȝurne		He desired swiþe ȝernne
	To wraste wyþ þat foule þing		To wrastli wiþ þat foule þing
	Þat wes þe geaundene kyng ·		Þat was þe geauntes king.
55	Ant of Bruyt he bad þe bone ·	405	Of Brutus he bad a bone
	Ant he him grauntede suiþe sone		& he him graunted swiþe sone.
	¶ Corine*us* anon forth schet		Cornius anon forþ schete
	To þe kyng þat wes so gret		To þe geaunt þat was so grete,
	Al day to gedere hy wrastly coune ·		Al day wrastli þay gunne
60	Fforto he*m* faylede lyht of soune ·	410	Fort hem failed liȝt of sunne.
	Þe kyng wes a teoned strouge		Gomagog was atened strong
	Þat Corine*us* a stod so louge ·		Þat o man him stode so long
	Ant so harde he him tuaste		& Cornius he prest so fast
	Þat þre ribbes in him þo barste		Þat to ribbes in his side tobrast.
65	Bruyt byhueld Corineus	415	Brut biheld Cornius
	Ant to him he seide þus		& to him he seyd þus,
	Corine*us* wet dest þou nouþe		'Cornius, what dostow nouþe?
	Nes ner by norþe ne by souþe		Nas neuer, bi norþ, no bi souþe,
	Ne by water ne by londe ·		No bi water, no bi londe,
70	Er þen nou þi piere yfonde ·	420	Er now þi per yfounde;
	Ant ȝef þe word of þe spronge		& ȝif þe word of þe sprong
	Þat eny mon þe stode so longe		Þat o man þe stode so long,
	Geaunt oþer champioun		Geaunt oþer champioun,
	Al þyn honour were leid adoun ·		Al þine anour wer leyd adoun,
75	Ant nomeliche to þy lemmon	425	& nameliche to þi leman
	Þat ys wyttore þen þe fom ·		Þat is so feir a wiman.'
	¶ Þo Corine*us* under ȝat		¶ When Cornius herd þat
	Þat Bruyt of ys lemmon spac ·		Þat Brut of his leman spac,
	Of Erneburh þat maide honed		Of Ernebourwe þat maiden hende,
80	To Geomagog he con wende ·	430	To Gomagog he gan wende
	Ant him putte wiþ suche st*re*yngþe· [**fol. 62va**]		& him pelt wiþ swiche strengþe
	Þah he were more þon he of lemþe ·		Þei he wer more þan he o lengþe,
	Þat fourti fet roumede & grete ·		Þat fourti fot roume & gret,
	In to þe see he made hi*m* lepe ·		Into þe se he made him lepe.
		435	Cornius þat was so fre
			He wode into þe salt se
			& wiþ a swerd þat wald wele bite
			Þe geauntes heued he gan ofsmite
			& dede it hong bi a cheyne
		440	In Cornewaile for certeyne.
85	¶ Þo þe geauntz were ouercome ·		When þe geauntes wer ouercome [**fol. 306va**]
	Ant Bruyt hade þis lond ynome		& Brut hadde þis lond ynome,
	Corine*us* lonede þe more		Cornius him was so lef
	Al þat contrey þarefore ·		Þat al a cuntre he him ȝef

	Ant clepede hit for þat batayle	445	& cleped þat cuntre for þat bateyle
90	After Cornine*us* Cornwayle ·		After Cornius, Cornewayle.
	¶ Bruyt hade muche folk wiþ him		¶ Brut hadde miche folk wiþ him,
	Boþe fremede & eke kun ·		Boþe of fremde & of kin,
	Þat were erþe tilyes gode ·		Þat wer tiliers gode;
	Hy faleweden erþe & feolden wode	450	Þai falwede erþe & felled wode
95	Ant of þis lond þat wes so wylde ·		Of þis lond þat was so wilde.
	Hy bigonne tounes to builde ·		Þai bigun tounes to bilde:
	Londone he made furst wiþ gome		Brut made Londen first wiþ game
	Ant ȝef hit his oune nome ·		& ȝaf it his houne name,
	Newe Troye for he com ·	455	Newe Troye, for he cam
100	Ffurst from Troye & hit bygon ·		First fram Troye & it bigan.
	¶ Jn his time wiþ oute les ·		
	Elye þe prophete ichose wes		
	Þe children of yrael bi dai & nith		
	Þe laȝe techen hem ariht		
105	Þe laȝe he tahte he*m* ychwene ·		
	On hem þer after hit wes sene ·		
			Brut sett Londen ston
			& þis wordes he seyd anon,
			‘ȝif ich king þat after me come
		460	Make þis cite wide & rome
			As ichaue bi mi day,
			ȝete herafter men sigge may
			Þat Troye nas neuer so fair cite
			So þis cite schal be.’
		465	Þilke time, þurth Brutus mouþe,
			Newe Troye it was name couþe.
	¶ Bruyt hade þre sones		¶ Brut hadde þre sones,
	Þat were suyþe feyre gomes ·		Þat wer swiþe fair gomes:
	¶ Þat on wes hote Lokeryn ·		Þeldest men cleped Lokerin,
110	He reignede after his fader fyn ·	470	He regned after his fader fin;
	¶ Cambroun hatte þat oþer ·		Camber hiȝt þat oþer,
	He wes þe mydleste broþer ·		He was þe midel broþer,
	He was ybore in Deuenschire ·		He was born in Deuenschire,
	Of Wales he wes maked sire ·		Of al Wales Brut made him sire;
115	¶ Albanact*us* þe þridde iclepud wes	475	Albanak þe þridde cleped wes,
	Scotlond to ys part he ches		Scotlond to him he ches,
	Ant þarefore ase rych ys		Al Brut wan to his hond
	Al þat Bretaygne yclepud ys [**fol. 62vb**]		Inglond, Wales & Scotlond.
	He reignede her		¶ Brut was king & regned her,
120	Oþer half houndred ȝer	480	Forsoþe, vþer halfhundred ȝer;
	At Westminstr he was ded ·		Biside Newe Troye he was ded
	Ant yburied for so he bed		& ybirid þer so he bed,
			Wel neye Temes on þe lond
			Þer þat Westeminster stond.
		485	Westeminster was nouȝt bigun þo [**fol. 306vb**]
			No ȝeres after mani & mo.
			And sone anon after him
	[p]Þo anon after hym		
	Reygnede his sone Lokeryn ·		Regned his sone Lokerin.
125	Crafti mon for soþe he wes		
	He wrohte her wiþ oute les		
	¶ Tuo merueilles grete ywys		
	Vrokynghole þat on clepud ys		
	Sikerlich wiþoute gyle		

130	Biside Glastingbury a myle ·		
	¶ A chapele þat oþer ys		
	Þat ouer þe erþe hongeþ þus		
	Ffrom þe erþe tuenti fet		
	Þe Leynthe for soþe last ȝet		
135	Of seint Susanne wyþ oute les		
	Þe chapele ycleped wes		
			Of þis lond þat was so wi[l]de
		490	He bigan tounes to bilde.
	He reignede her		Lokerin regned her
	An hondred wynter & two ȝer		Seuen & fiȝti ful ȝer
			Bi his fader men him leyd,
			As þe philosophus ous seyd.
	[A]**A**fter hym reignede Eboras	495	After regned Eboras
140	Þat suiþe wis & crafti was		Þat swiþe wise & crafti was -
	He wes Lokerynes sone ·		He was Lokerines sone.
	Euerwike wes his meste wone		He made ȝorke wide & rome
	Ant he Euerwike made & met		O lengþe & brede he it mete
	More þen Londene by seue stret	500	More þan Londen bi seue[n] strete,
145	Alhdud & maydenescastel bo ·		& Newerk & Maidens Castel bo,
	Ant mound de le Rous he made also ·		& Mondelrose he dede also.
	¶ Ant þo Dauid & his teem		In þat time Dauid & his tem
	Reigneden in Ierusaleem ·		Regned in Ierusalem.
		505	¶ Eboras regned her
			Tvo & sexti ful ȝer;
			Bot of þat ich king
			Finde we no biriing,
			For he was ded in a forest
		510	Huntende after a wilde best.
			& so after þat ich king
			Was swiþe grete siching.
			To ȝer oþer more
			Þis lond was in gret sore,
		515	So þat oft & ylome
			To chese a king conseyl þai nome;
			Þo þai acorded in al þing
	[A]**A**fter hym Lud Hudynbras ·		Þat Eboras sone was crouned king.
150	So Eboras sone ycleped was		Lud hete þat gode gome
	Hade þis lond euer uch del ·	520	Þat was Eboras sone.
	Ant [hyt] ȝemede suyþe wel ·		He was a swiþe wise man,
	He made Caunterbury anon ·		Canterbirye he first bigan
			Lakok & Totbirie
	Ant oþer tounes mani and on ·		& oþer tounes þat ben so mirie,
		525	& þe Vise also
			& oþer tounes mani mo.
			& sone anon after þat
155	Wynchestre & Schaftesburye ·		
	Þer spac an ern prophecie ·		
	Þre dawes & þre nyht [**fol. 63ra**]		
	Þe prophecie he tolde riht		
	Wet in Englond schulde by falle ·		
160	Þat þer weren hit herden alle		
	¶ Lud þat ichabbe of ytold ·		
	He wes kyng suyþe bold ·		
	To bulden he henede gode wate ·		
	At Londone he made a gate ·		At Londen he made a gat

165	Ant clepede hit after ys nome ·		& ȝaf it his owhen name, [**fol. 307ra**]
	Ludagate al wiþ gome ·	530	Ludgate, in his game.
			¶ King Lud regned here
			Four score & sex ȝer,
			At Ludgate liþe his bon
			Yloken in a marbel ston.
	[A]**A**fter þilke kyng Lud	535	After þe king Lud
	Reignede his sone Bladud ·		Regned his sone Bladud.
	He wes clerk of Nigremacie		He was a clerk of nigramacie,
170	Þat ys an art of gret maist*ri*e.		Þat is an art of gret maistrie.
	He made þe wonder ful ywis		He made a wonder þing, ywis,
	Þat hote baþe ycleped ys	540	Þe hote baþe ycleped it is.
	Herkeneþ alle þat beþ hende ·		¶ Herkeneþ al þat beþ hende
	Ant y schal telle ord & ende		& y schal tel word & ende
175	þe rihte soþe ful y wis		Hou þe hote baþe ymaked is,
	Hou hote baþe ymaked ys ·		Al for soþ, wiþouten mis.
	Ffour tonnes þer beoþ of bras	545	Tvay tonnes þer ben of bras
	Al for soþe þus hit was ·		& oþer tvay þer ben of glas;
	Feole þinges þerbeþ ynne ·		Seuen maner saltes þer ben in
180	Craftilich ymad wiþ ginne		& oþer þing ymade wiþ ginne,
	Quic brunston & oþer al suo ·		Quic brimston & oþer also,
	Wiþ wildefur ymad þer to ·	550	& wild fure ymeynd þerto,
	Salgemme & Salpetre		Sal gemme & sal petre,
	Salarmoniac þer ys eke ·		Sal armoniak þer is eke,
185	Salnitre þat ys briht		Sal arbrut, sal arkelin -
			Sal gemme is meynt wiþ him -
		555	Sal kemim, sal nitre briȝt,
	Berneþ boþe day & nyth ·		Þat brinneþ boþe day & niȝt.
	þis ys in þe tonnes ydon		Al þis ben in þe tonnes ydon
	Ant oþer þinges mani on		& oþer þinges mani on
	Berneþ boþe nyht & day		Þat brenneþ boþe niȝt & day,
190	Ah neuer quenchen hit ne may ·	560	Þat neuer quenche it no may.
	Jn four springes þe tonnes liggeþ		In four welle springes þe tonnes liggeþ,
	Ase þis philosophes siggeþ ·		So þe philosophus ous siggeþ,
	Þe hete wiþynne was wiþoute		Þe hete wiþin þe water wiþoute
	Makeþ hot al aboute		Makeþ it hote al aboute.
195	Þe tuo springes urneþ yfere	565	Þe to welle springes herneþ yfere,
	Ah þe oþer tuo beþ more clere ·		Ac þe oþer to be mare clere;
	Þer of ys maked ful ywis [**fol. 63rb**]		Þerof for soþe mid ywis
	Þat kinges baþe ycleped ys		Þe kinges baþe ymaked is.
	Þilke maister Bladud		¶ Þilke king Bladud,
200	Þat wes kyngessone Lud ·	570	Þat was þe kinges sone Lud,
	Þo he þis ilke baþe made		Þo he hadde þis baþe ywrouȝt,
	Ant he eny defante hade		& him failed þerto ouȝt
	Of þinges þat þer schulde to ·		Of þing þat þer schuld to, [**fol. 307rb**]
	Herkneþ hou he wolde do ·		Herkeneþ w[h]at he wold do:
205	Ffrom Baþe to Londene he wolde fleo	575	Fram Baþe to Londen he wald fle
	Ant þilke dai self aȝeyn teo		& þat day comen oȝe
	Ant vacche þat þerto by fel		& feche þing þat þerto bifel,
	He wes quit & suiþe snel ·		So swift he was & so snel;
	Þo þes maister wes ded ·		Swiche wer al his meistrie,
		580	For he couþe of nigromacie.
			¶ Þilk Bladud þe king
			ȝete dede a meruaylous þing,
			He ȝaf þe deuel, bi verray enscent,
			Euerich ȝer a man to rent,

	585 To haue & dele to her owe, Euermore þe fire to blowe; & for þat rent þai blowen it ay, & so schal do til domesday. ¶ King Bladud regned here 590 An hundred & fifti ful ȝere. & when þat Bladud was ded
210 Anon he wende to þe qued · Ffor C*ri*st nas nout ȝet ybore Ne deþ suffrede hi*m* nouȝt fore ·	His soul went to þe qued, For Ihesu nas nouȝt ȝet ybore No deþ suffred him nouȝt fore. 595 At Ludgate liþe his bon Biside his fader depe in a ston. When Bladud was ded her Regned his sone Fortiger, & was a douhti man at nede 600 & wele couþe fiȝt opon a stede. His per nowhar he fond Wher þat he come in ani lond, For he was boþe war & wise & a man of miche priis. 605 In þe tour of Eldwerk he was ded, In þe wal ybirid in lede, Þat stont opon Houndesdiche Bitvene Algat & þe Tour sikerlich. After regned a king bold 610 Þat was yhoten Denewold. He was stalworþ & gode On lond & on þe salt flod. In mani a lond he went ful wide Auentours to seke & abide. 615 He was a man of gret anour, In euerich a side conquerour, & in þis lond þat was so wilde [**fol. 307va**] He bigan tounes to bilde; Þerin he sett men wel ȝepe 620 Þis lond riȝt for to kepe. ¶ Þat ich king Denewold, Þat ichaue of ytold, Tvay sones he hadde þenne Þat on hete Belin & [þat] oþer hete Brenne. 625 Þai were men of gret maistrie: Þai wan Fraunce & Normandye & al þat lond swiþe sone Fram Fraunce to þe court of Rome. Þilke Belin & þilke Brenne 630 Four wayes þai made þenne Þurth Þe strengþe of her hond Þat goþ þurthout Jnglond; Þat on to þis day ȝete Is ycleped Watelingstrete, 635 Þat oþer is cleped Fosse Þat goþ fram Cornewaile into Scosse. Þe þridde Ikelingstrete cleped is, Þat oþer Fossedike, ywis. ¶ King Denewold regned here 640 Al hole an hundred ȝere;

		At Scheftesbirie, wiþouten lesing, Is ymaked his biriing. After him, witterli, Hadde Belin þis lond ȝeres fifti
	645	He was Breteines derling, Ac he ne was nouȝt þerof king, For he no wald noþing owe, Noiþer of heye ne of lowe, Bot of his propre rent
	650	Spended he, verray ascent; Þo nold noiþer heye no lowe Noþing Belin wiþ honour knowe. Þo þurth pride & gret meschaunce Þis lond was in gret destaunce,
	655	After þat, wiþ gret vigour, Into þis lond come a conquerour, Hingist, þe strong king, Wele doinde in al þing. He was conquerour of pris
	660	& king he was ȝepe & wiis. To þe riche he was gode [**fol. 307vb**] & wiþ þe pouer mild of mode. Of godenes was al his fame, Sterne in wretþe & glad in game.
	665	Of belding he was wise man: Lyncoln first he bigan, Herforþ & Wircestre, Schrowesbirye, Staford & Chestre, Oxenford & Reding;
	670	Of Walingford he made þe gining, Grauntebrige & Huntingdone, Bedeford & Norhamtone, Gloucester & Þrekingham, Dudele & Euesham.
	675	¶ Hingist wan to his hond Inglond, Wales & Scotlond. After his barouns swiþe he sent, As þai wald ben vnschent, Þai schuld come to his parlement
	680	To here þe kinges comandment. He sent hem bode al þurth & þurth Þat þai schuld be at Londen burth Þo þe parlement was ynome, & al þe barons þider come.
	685	Þe king made hem swere oþes hold Þat for her lord him held þai schold. Ordenaunce he lete make Þat neuer seþþe wer forsake: ȝif ani þef þat men fond
	690	In ani stede of his lond, Non abide no schuld be þer Þat þe þef honged no wer ȝif þe þift so miche wold be Þritti plates of þe mone.
	695	¶ King Hingist he was a sire, He made boþe hundred & schire

	& afterward, wiþouten gile, He made boþe forlong & mile. He sett a stent, riȝt verray, 700 Þat a grome schuld gon o day: In winter day he schuld go Tventi miles & namo, & in somer, wiþouten gile, He schuld go to & þritti mile. 705 In winter he schuld take penis þre - [**fol. 308ra**] Bi no lesse no schuld he be - Þe tvay in mete & drink & fere, Þe þridde for to glad his chere; I[n] somer four penis he schuld haue - 710 No lasse no schuld he take no kraue - Þe þre penis in mete & drink For trauail & his sore swink, Þe ferþe peni spende he schold On fair wimen ȝif he wold. 715 ¶ King Hingist made as men mai se A gret meruaile in þe west cuntre, Wiþ messangers stark & strong. In o niȝt out of Jrlond Opon þe Pleyn of Salesbirye, 720 A mile out of Hambesbirie, He dede it clepe in his game Hingiston in his name. ¶ In þat ston was made a sete; To eueriche man it is mete, 725 To al men þat come þere, ȝif þai of loue trewe were. Þo went Hingist sone anon Into Londen sone he come; Þe buriays alle curteys & fre 730 Welcomed him fair into þat cite. Hingist hem answerd anon, 'Wele be ȝou, gode men ichon, Þo Brut first þis cite ches Newe Troye ycleped it wes, 735 & seþþe þo þat went her þurth For king Lud, Luddesburth. ¶ & nov, lordinges, ich warn ȝou alle Hingisthom ȝe schullen it calle.' ¶ King Hingist, as y ȝou telle, 740 Coniourd þre hundred fendes of helle Þat þai schuld make a brigge Ouer þe se for to ligge. Aday þai schuld to helle gon & fram þennes bring þe ston 745 Þat schuld to þe brigge go, & þe siment þat fel þerto, & euermore o niȝt in derke Opon þe brigge þai schuld werke, On þis maner it to diȝt: [**fol. 308rb**] 750 Þe brigge to make & wirke o niȝt So al in a litel while Þe brigge was maked .xx. mile.

	& þo anon þe conquerour Þer lete make a strong tour, 755 Wele yhoused & wele ybeld, (T)chambers & halles wiþ mani teld, ȝif he oþer his went ouer þe se Þat he miȝt þer herberwed be. ¶ Anon þe king Selmin of Fraunce, 760 When he herd þat meschaunce, Swiþe anon he sent his sond To king Hengist of Jnglond & seyd him þo, wiþ gode skele, Þe se was his, bot þe haluendele, 765 & bad him þat he schuld late On þe brigge no ferþer to make, & elles he seyd, wiþouten feyle, Þat he wald ȝif on him batayle & into Jnglond come 770 & destruen al & some. Hingist seyd he schuld liȝe, He schuld ȝeld him Normundye As his ancesters hadde bifore - He wald it were nouȝt forlore - 775 ‘Oþer in Fraunce þurth me Strong bateyl schal þer be.’ ¶ Þe messangers went oȝain & told þe king for certeyn Þat he miȝt drede & quake 780 For wer þat Hingist walde make. At Moustrel, wiþouten lesing, Selmin mett wiþ Hingist our king, & Hingist þo þe conquerour Spak to him wiþ gret honour 785 & bad king Selmin hastily Deliuer him vp al Normundye For þe wrong he hadde him do, & more raunson þerto. Þo wiþ solempnite & pris 790 Selmin ladde Hingist into Paris; Wiþ largesse & solempnete A moneþ þer fest held he, & þo þurth grete loue al sone [**fol. 308va**] Selmin ȝaf Hengist al Gascone 795 & Normundye also, Wiþ al þe anour þat lay þerto. Selmin made þe charter as Hengist wold & seled it al wiþ red gold & seyd as long as schineþ þe sonne 800 Þe londes wer his, wiþ riȝt ywonne. When þe fest was yhold An hole moneþ as ich er told Hingist went into Gascone & tok þerin sesyn sone. 805 In Gascoyne he gan sesin hold xii moneþes & fourti days ytold. Þo he had in Normondye be To ȝer & more biȝond þe se

	& in fele londes þe pris ywonne, 810 More þan ani man vnder sonne. Wiþ tresore & wiþ gret maine He com into Litel Bretayne. ¶ Selmin bisouȝt Hengist our king Þat he him graunted a litel þing 815 Of þe brigge of to late No forþer þat he no dede it make. Hengist him seyd, bi his leute, No forþer no schuld it maked be. ¶ Þo Hingist com into þis lond 820 Feyr presentes him com to hond, Tventi mules charged wiþ gold Selmin him sent to hauen in wold, & a þousand tonnes of win Him sent to present king Selmin. 825 Hingist seyd to hem anon: 'Welcome be ȝe euerichon. Þanke ȝour lord þat is so hende Þat he wald me þis present sende. Say him þus in al þing, 830 As ich am trewe kniȝt & king, In al þat y may & can While ich liue, ich am his man, & trewþe euer y schel him held, Saue omage nil y non him ȝeld, 835 To him no to liuiand man Whiles y mi riȝt witt can. ¶ Hingist þo þat was so strong [**fol. 308vb**] Went him þan into Scotlond, Þurthout al þat lond þere, 840 & duelled þerin seuen ȝere. Of þat lond wast & wilde Gode tounes he lete bilde, & as he come Scotlond fram He bigan furst Durham; 845 Carlel he dede also & riȝt wele biwalled hem bo. Þe Newe Castel he lete aginne & on Tine it sett wiþ ginne. Into Wales þo swiþe he sent 850 Þurth al þat lond his comandment, & of her londes wast & wilde Strong tounes he dede hem bilde. Þo went þe king to Hengisthom & al þe lond folk þider come; 855 Þer he comand heye & lowe Her wast londes tile & sowe. Þre score bateyls Hingist ouercam, Tvelue kingdome into his hond he nam. He was a long man o liue, 860 Fife & þritti childer he wan on seuen wiue. Þe seuen & tventi wer kinges strong, Þe best bodis in ani lond; Werrours þai were & fair men, Kinges oþer erles Hingist made hem.

		865	Maidens children he hadde eyʒte,
			Fair leuedis & wele yteyʒte;
			Al he gan his londes þurth gon,
			Quenes he made hem euerichon.
			Caues he made mani on
		870	At Glastingebirie vnder þe ston,
			Woninge stede gode & sounde
			Wel depe in þe hard grounde.
			¶ King Hingist regned here
			To hundred & fifti ʒer.
		875	At Glastingbiri wiþouten lesing
			Þer was made his biriing.
	[A]**A**fter Bladud wes heir		After him regned his eir,
	Ys oune sone þat hatte Leyr		His sone, þat men cleped Leyr.
215	He made Leircestre wiþ gome		He made Leycester wiþ game,
	Ant ʒef hit ys oune nome ·	880	& ʒaf it his owen name.
			¶ King Leir regned here [**fol. 309ra**]
			Nouʒt bot þrettene ʒer
			For he dede as vnwise man:
			Wiþ his douhter he ʒaf his kingdam
		885	To a wicked fals couward
			¶ Þat was his owen steward.
			So his douhter & hir hosbond
			Drof king Leir out of lond.
			King Leir him went ouer se
		890	In wel grete pouerte;
			He went about euerywher
			Fif & tventi ful ʒer.
			¶ So to a kinges court come he
			& bad þe mete par charite.
		895	Þe steward bifor þe king
			Anon him brouʒt, wiþouten lesing,
			& feir cloþes he him fett
			& to þe mete he him sett.
			Opon þe king he gan bihold
		900	& oft to himself he told,
			‘Whilom ich was won king to be.
			Allas, þis grete pouerte.
			Wheþer y schal while ich libbe
			Wiþ pouerte mi mete bidde.’
		905	When he hadde wele y-ete
			Þe king anon to him gan speke,
			‘Tel me’ he seyd ‘now atte frome
			Fram wiche lond artow come
			& what maner man hastow be.
		910	Al þe soþe telle þou me.’
			¶ ‘Sir’ he seyd ‘when ich was diʒt,
			Soþ to seyn, ich was a kniʒt,
			& forsoþe, wiþouten lesing,
			In Michel Breteyne y was king.’
		915	Anon, wiþouten ani destaunce,
			He told þe king of his meschaunce
			& al hou he hadde ybe
			Fif & tventi ʒer fram his cuntre.
			¶ Þe king anon him lete diʒt
		920	Ten hundred of gode kniʒt

[A]**A**fter him reignede his sone bold ·
Þat wes icleped Denewold·
He mahnesbury
220 Lacok & Cettosbury ·
Ant Keuises al so
Ant oþer tounes fele mo ·
Tueye sones he hade þenne
Þat on Belyns þat oþer Brenne ·
225 Hy weren men of cheualerie
Hy wonne F*ra*unce & Normandie
Ant þa lond suiþe sone ·
Ffrom F*ra*unce þat come to Rome ·
¶ Þilke Belins & Brenne
230 Made four wayes þenne
Þourh Þe g*ra*ce of godes sonde
Þourh out al Engelonde ·
¶ Þat on to þisse daye ȝet
Is ycleped Watelingstret
235 ¶ Þat oþer is icleped Ffosse ·
Geþ from Cornewaile into Scosse
Launde in Scotlond of gret p*ri*s [**fol. 63va**]
In al þat lond feirore þer nys
¶ Ikenildstret þer beoþ þre ·
240 ¶ Offedich þe furþe wol be ·
[A]**A**fter him com a muche mon ·
Wes ycleped Cassabalon ·
A wis kyn & a war
He caste out Juli*us* Cesar
245 Þat wes emp*er*oure of rome
Out þisse londe sone ·

& gode armour þat hem fel to;
Fif þousand of fot men also.
Þo com Leir into þis lond
Wiþ his ost gret & strong;
925 Þurth al þis lond ner & fer [**fol. 309rb**]
He arered strong wer.
Þurth batayle of kniȝtes strong
His reume he wan into his hond,
Ac his douhter er þan was ded,
930 & þat forsoþe was no qued.
Anon after, wiþ londes lawe,
His steward was hong & drawe.
Fourti wiken, wiþouten lesing,
Leir regned þerafter king.
935 Þo he was ded men leyd his bon
At Leicestre in a marble ston.
After regned his derling,
His sone þat hete Cole king;
He made Colchester wiþ game
940 & ȝaf it his owhen name.
ȝernemouþe he arered þo
& Dunstaple he dede also.
¶ Col king regned here
Almest to & fifti ȝer.
945 Who so wil se his graue
It is at Colchestre in a kaue.

After him come a miche man,
He was yhote Casseribalan.
In his time wiþ grete vigour
950 Com Julius Cesar þemperour
Wiþ his folk into þis lond
& sesed miche into his hond.

			Hingisthom to him he wan,
			& er þan died mani a man.
		955	Þurth falsnisse, tresoun & pride
			Gret folk was sleyn bi ich a side.
			Þurth gret strengþe þe cite he nom
			Þat was ycleped Hingis[t]hom.
			For it was wiþ strengþe ygete,
		960	Londen þe cite he dede clepe,
			& so it schal be cleped ay
			Til þat it be domesday.
			Þurth strengþe of hond & g[r]et tresour
			At Londe[n] he dede make a tour.
		965	Þe castel of Bristow he ded also,
			Rouchester opon Medeway þerto.
			¶ Cassibalan went into Scotlond
			& purvayd him ost ich vnderstond.
			He come to aseyl Julius Cesar; [**fol. 309va**]
		970	Er þat he were þerof war,
			& er þe tiding was to him come,
			Cassibalan was in Londone.
			He drof Julius Cesar out of lond
			Wiþ kniȝtes stef & strong.
		975	Cassibalan he[m] drof wiþ meistrie
			Þurth Fraunce, Borgoyne & No[r]mondye,
	Ant tuye hi*m* ouercom ·		& in Romaine ouercom him to siþe.
	Ant at þe þridde time Cesar hi*m* nom ·		& at þe þride time in þis wise
	Ant þo Cassabalon wes ouercome ·		Cassibalan þurth his men sauage
		980	Was nome to Julius ostage,
			& er þat he most out come
250	He ȝef gret t*rou*age to Rome ·		He ȝaf gret trolliage to Rome:
	Þre hundred pound by ȝer		Þre hundred pound ich ȝer,
	Er he moste be quite & sker		Er þat he most be quite & sker.
	Þat were sexti ȝer by fore ·	985	Þat was sexti ȝer bifore,
	Er þen ast were ybore ·		Er Ihesu was of Marie bore;
			Cassibalan regned here
			Four & fifti ful ȝer.
			Forsoþe at Winchester liþe his bon
		990	Biloken in a marbel ston.
255	[A]**A**fter hi*m* Utherpendragoun ·		Utred regned after þan
	Hade þis lond al & som ·		Anon after Cassibalan.
	He won to ys hond		He was adrad swiþe strong
	Englond Wales & Scotlond ·		Of wer in his owhen lond,
		995	He lete castels sone arere
			To duelle in ȝif it nede were.
			He no wold non londes craue
			Bot þat he auȝt wiþ riȝt to haue,
			& to hauen in weld
		1000	Þat his auncestres held:
			Gascoyne & Normondye,
			As Hingist it wan wiþ meistri.
	He reignede here þritti ȝer		¶ King Vntred regned here
			To & sexti ful ȝer.
260	To Glastinb*ur*y me him ber	1005	At Glastinbirie he was ded
			& ybirid, for so he bed,
			For þat Hingist þer birid was,
			He wold ligge bi him in þat plas.

[A]**A**fter hi*m* his sone Arthur
Henede þis lond þourh & þourh
He was þe boste kyng at nede
Þat euer mihte ride on stede ·
265 Oþer wepne welde oþer folk out lede ·
Of mon ne hede he neuer drede ·
He ne com neuer in none londe
Þat he ne hede þe here honde

Anon after þat ich time
1010 Regned a king þat hiȝt Hine.
He was a swiþe wise man,
Heye wayes þurth þis lond he gan
Jn lengþe & brede & environ; [**fol. 309vb**]
He lete make wayes bitven eueri toun,
1015 & þer þe way ouer þe water schuld ligge
Þe contre schuld make a brigge.
& þurth his lond euerichwhere
He lete chepeinges arere
For to selle & for to bigge,
1020 Who so wold bi chafar libbe.
He went him into Cornewaile
& fast beldeþ þer, saun fayle.
He made Launsetone & Tintagel
Bodemyn & Lostwiþiel.
1025 Þilke cuntre he gan þurth gon
& made tounes mani on.
King Hine regned here
Fif score & seuen ȝere.
His hert wiþ his entreyle
1030 Was leyd at Bodemyn, saun faile.
At Glastingbiri, wiþouten lesing,
Was of his bodi þe biring.
King Fortiger after him cam
Into þis lond & it wan
1035 Wiþ ost & wiþ wer strong.
He went þurthout þis lond -
Men þai wer riȝt sauage -
& nom gret ransoun þurth taliage.
Wiþ men & wiþ schippes strong
1040 Þe tresour was lad out of þis lond,
Corn vestes out of þis lond was sent.
Þo was þis lond yschent.
Þerls & barouns to Wales went
& to king Arthour þai sent
1045 & seyd al þat he schold
Breteyne win ȝif he wold.
¶ Þo agan grete wer & strong
In euerich a side in þis lond
Þurth a strong conquerour
1050 Þat was ycleped king Arthour.
Of lond he drof Fortigerne
& al his folk swiþe ȝernne.
Arthour dede sle al his men
& þis lond he tok to him.
1055 Ac Fortiger er þat regned here
Þre score & four ȝere.
After him [wiþ] gret anour [**fol. 310ra**]
Regned þe king Arthour;

	Þ*er* nes neu*er* such k[i]ng before ·		
270	Ne non ne [by]ht þer neuermore ·		
	¶ Whyl kyng Arthur wes alyu[e]		
	Jn Bretaigne wes chyualerie		
	Ant þe in Bretaigne were yfonde		
	Þis g*re*t auent*ur*es ich onder stonde ·		
275	Þat ʒe habbeþ yherd her þis		
	Ofte siþes & soth hit ys		
	Wyth kyng Arthur wes a knyht [**fol. 63vb**]		
	Wel ychot Eweyn he hyht		
	Þer nes mon in al þe londe		
280	Þat durste in fich aʒein him stonde		
	Þis kyng [arthur] as ich er tolde		
	He wes king suiþe bold ·		
	He won Engelond suiþe sone		
	Out of þe t*ru*age of rome ·		
285	Ant Luces þe emp*er*eour sauntʒ fayle ·		
	He ouercom in bataille ·		
	He get þourh his cheualerie		
	F*ra*unce þat come to Lumbardie		
	Ant Rome he wolde han ymone		
290	Ant þo þe tidinge him wes icome		
	Þat Moddred hys cosyn ·		
	Eng*e*lond wolde by nymen him		
	Ant hede yleye by þe quene		
	Geneure þat wes bryth & schene ·		
295	Þat wes king Arthures wyf		
	Þat he louede so ys lyf ·		
	¶ Ase sone ase Arthur þe kyng		
	Hede herd þis tiding		
	To engelond he turnde aʒein		
300	Boþe wiþ knyth & wiþ sueyn ·		
	Ant Engelond haþ ynome ywys		
	Ant halt hit ase rith ys ·		
	After þon he liuede ten ʒer		
	To Glastingbury me him ber ·		
305	God almihti þat best may		Fif hundred & sexti ʒer
	Ʒeue hi*m* reste nyth & day ·	1060	After þat Marie Ihesu bere.
	Þ Erafter tuo &tuenti ʒer ·		At Glastingbiri verrament
	Efter þat Marie C*ri*st ber ·		Was Arthours cronement,
			Wiþ grete anour also he wold
			In a chaier al of gold.
		1065	He was þe best kniʒt at nede
			Þat miʒt ride on ani stede
			Or wepen bere or folk out lede;
			Of man no hadde he neuer drede.
			He was of wer swiþe wise,
		1070	In ich bateyle he had þe prise.
			Al þat Fortiger hadde nome
			Swiche (to) he made oʒain come,
			& al þat gode he delt among
			To pouer men wer in his lond.
		1075	¶ Þerafter aros wer strong
			Þurth þe quen in þis lond.
			Launcelot de Lac held his wiif,
			Forþi bitven hem ros gret striif.

Eleutherie þe pope of Rome
310 Stablede suiþe sone
Godes werkes wuirche
Ant singe in holy chirche ·
¶ Gloria in excelsis deo ·
Ant ʒef gret pardon þer to
315 ¶ After þon ich onder stonde ·
¶ Lucius brohte into Engelonde [**fol. 64ra**]
Christendome griht & pees
Ffrom þe pope Elentheries
¶ Þilke Luci*us* þourh godes sonde ·
320 Made þre archebishopes in Islonde ·
Ant xxviij he made also
Leod bishopes þer to ·

Lancelot was a queynt man,
1080 For þe quen sake he made Notingham;
Þe castel wiþ mani selcouþe wonder
Caues mani he made þervnder
Riʒt in þe hard ston.
Chambers he made mani on
1085 Þat þe quen miʒt in wone
ʒif þe king wald þider come.
Þre ʒere & moneþes ten
Wiþ strengþe he held Gwinore þe quen.
King Arthour lete forbede him
1090 His reume for to wonen in.
Launcelot was curteys & hende,
To Glastingbiri he gan wende,
& þe quen wiþ gret honour
Þider he brouʒt to king Arthour.
1095 Launcelot spak wordes bold:
Bot he wald hir wiþ honour hold,
Wiþ strong wer he wald on him come
Til he wer sleyn oþer ynome.
He seyd ‘ʒif Arthour þe king
1100 Makeþ eni reproueing,
Wiþ bateyle strong y schal him ʒeld, [**fol. 310rb**]
ʒif God wil mi liif held.’
¶ At Glastingbiri was made a fest -
After neuer non so honest -
1105 & þer was þe fest hold
Of þe Rounde Table, so men told.
A messanger to þat fest was come
Þat hete Cradoc, Craybonis sone.
He hadde a mantel wiþ him brouʒt,
1110 To no cokkewold wiif nas it nouʒt.
Who so wil to Glastingesbiri gon ariʒt
Þat mantel he mai se wele ydiʒt.
¶ King Arthour regned here
To & tventi ful ʒere.
1115 At Glastingbiri he was ded
& ybirid, for so he bed.

After him, wiþouten lesing,

			Regned Aþelberd þe king.
			He was a swiþe wise man,
	¶ Þat was tofore þe come of Seynt Austin her	1120	Of Seynt Austin Cristendom he nam
			After þe berþe of Ihesu here
	Ffour hundred & ahte & fourti ʒer		.V. hundred & four score & lx ʒer.
325	¶ Dioclicien þilke time		
	Dude C*ri*stendome muche pine		
	In þilke time seint Albon		In þat time seynt Albon
	For Godes loue þolede m*ar*tirdome ·		For Godes loue þoled martirdome,
	¶ Kyn[g] ffortiger wiþ schome & schonde	1125	& fourti ʒer wiþ schame & schonde
330	Wes driuen out of engelonde ·		He was driuen out of Jnglond.
	Thourh Hengist*us* forsoþe ywys ·		
	Þat made þe tresoun for þ*us* hit ys ·		
	At Stonhenges wite ou wel ·		
	þer he hit made eueruch del ·		
335	Ffor merlyn hem saide biforen hond		
	He ne schulde ner dure in englond ·		
	¶ Rowenne þat was so feir may		
	Ffurst saide by þis day ·		
	To kyng Ffortig*er* wassail ·		
340	Ant þat onsuere wes drink hail ·		
			¶ In Tenet Seyint Austin gan ariue
			& preched Cristendome bliue.
			In Canterbiri he gan arere
		1130	An hous of order & duelled þere.
			Aþelberd þe gode king
			Al Tenet him ʒaf at þe gining
			& seyd he schuld þerwiþ gye
			His monkes wiþouten folie.
		1135	¶ Aþelberd regned here
			After he was cristened viij ʒer;
			At Caunterbiri, wiþouten lesing,
			Was ymade his biriing.
			After him regned Seberd þe king,
		1140	A gode man, wiþouten lesing.
			Of bischop Milit Cristendom he nam
			& Westminster first he bigan
			In þe honouraunce of Ihesu & of Marie
			& Peter & Paule vnder her baylie.
		1145	To bischop Milite he sent swiþe [**fol. 310va**]
			He schuld com & halwe it bliue.
			Þe bischop gan him wel feir diʒt
			& his men his pauilouns piʒt.
			¶ It was opon a satersday,
		1150	Forsoþe as y ʒou tel may,
			A pouer fischer bi Temes side
			Heyed wel ʒerne after þe tide,
			Whiche time he miʒt to water wende,
			ʒif God him wold ani fische sende,
		1155	He herd a man grede ‘hale, hale’,
			& euer he wende it hadde ben duale.
			Þo he hadde long ystond
			His bot he schef fro þe lond.
			Þe fischer spac to þe man
		1160	& seyd ‘wiltow ouer gan?’
			‘ʒa’ he seyd ‘for ichaue long

Crid after þe opon þis strond.'
It was a quarter o þe niȝt
Þat þe fischer him ouer diȝt
1165 Þo he come at Westenmister side.
Out of þe bot þe man gan stride,
'Fischer' he seyd 'wiþouten gile,
Ichil ȝeld þe þi while.
Fischer no þenke þe nouȝt long
1170 To abide me on þis strond.
Er þat ich fram þe wende
Sum fische God may þe sende;
Ac for noþing þatow miȝt se
Aferd nouȝt þou no be.'
1175 ¶ Þe man to Westenmister gan wende
& gret liȝt þer he tende;
Si(n)gnes he made on þe wal
& on þe grounde ouer al
Þat al men miȝt wele se.
1180 Of Gru he made an a. b. c.
& þo þe chirche halwed was.
Toward Temes he made his pas
& whan þat he at Temes come
Þe fischer he cleped son anon,
1185 'Bring' he seyd 'þi bot to me,
Anon fischen wil we.
Hastow ani fische ynome?'
'Nay' he seyd 'bi Godes sone.'
Into þe bot he went him swiþe, [**fol. 310vb**]
1190 To fische her nett þai diȝt bliue.
He seyd 'cast þe nett on þe riȝt side
ȝif we miȝt þe beter bitide.
In þe name of þe fader & þe sone
Þat sum fische wald to ous come,
1195 & in þe honour of þe holy gost,
Ihesu Crist of miȝt most,
As he is curteys & hende,
Þat sum fische he ous sende.'
Into þe water her nett þai kest
1200 Þat vnneþe it wald lest.
So miche fische hem com to hond
Þe fischer wende neuer haue com to lond;
So miche fische þan hade he
Þe fischer wende adrenched be.
1205 Ac þo he com to lond
Ful of fische his bot he fond.
Þe nombre of saumnes witterli
Were four hundred & fifti.
¶ A samoun þer was swiþe gret,
1210 Þe fairest fische of al þe hepe.
He seyd 'þe saumoun þat liþe here,
To bischop Milit þou it bere,
& say þarf him nouȝt hasty
Westeminster chirche to halwey;
1215 Sai þat Peter, on of þe tvelue,
Þat chirche haþ halwed to himselue:
Þe tokne þai may wele se,

Of Gru þai han an a. b. c.
Say him he þerin sing,
1220 & ȝif þe peple mi bliscing.
Loke þat neuer bi al þi miȝt
No fische nouȝt on þe sonne niȝt,
& say to þe king Seberd,
Þe best king of þis midnerd,
1225 Þat þurth Ihesu his swete miȝt
His sete is made in heuen-liȝt.’
He blisced him wiþ gode wille
& passed fram him swiþe stille.
¶ Sone so þe day him come
1230 Þe fischer to þe bischop nom.
Al þat he hadde sen he told
To þe bischop wiþ wordes bold.
‘Bischop’ he seyd ‘wiþ miȝt & mayn, [**fol. 311ra**]
Wiþ þine pauilouns turn oȝain.
1235 Today at Westemister þou schalt sing
& ȝif þe pople þe bliscing
Of Peter, prince of þe apostels tvelue;
Þat chirche haþ halwed to himselue.
Vnderstond þis swiþe wel,
1240 For it is soþe as godspel.
In his name to ȝou present y make.
Himselue þis saumoun he gan take.’
& anon for þat tiding
Þat ich stede is cleped Chering.
1245 ¶ Þe fischer went to þe king
& told him of Peters fischeing,
Of him & of þe bischop bo.
Þe king in hert was ioieful þo
& seyd ‘couenaunt ichil þe hold
1250 For þe tiding þou hast me told;
Riche man þan schaltow be
& al þine ofspring after þe.’
¶ Seberd regned here
Tvo & þritti ful ȝer.
1255 Westeminster he lete arere
& seþþe he was birid þere.
Heȝte hundred ȝer it is agon
Þat he was loken in a ston;
& seþþe as hole he was founde
1260 As þo he was leyd in grounde,
& ȝif ȝe wil nouȝt leue me
Go to Westeminster & ȝe may se.
In þat time wite ȝe wel
Com first ‘wesseyl & drinkheyl’
1265 Into þis lond, wiþouten wene,
Þurth a maiden briȝt & schene.
Sche was yhoten maiden Jnge;
Of hir men can rede & sing.
Lordinges, corteys & fre,
1270 Þis lond haþ hadde names þre:
First men cleped it Albion
& seþþe, for Brut, Breteyne anon,
& now Jnglond icleped it is

After maiden Inge, ywis.
1275 Þilke Jnge fram Speyne come
& wiþ hem mani moder sone;
For gret hunger, ich vnderstond, [**fol. 311rb**]
Inge went out of hir lond,
For þer was grete defaute of mete
1280 Þat vnneþe miȝt þai ani gete.
Þo was folk loked of to go
Or to deþ haue ben ydo.
Inge a kinges douhter sche was,
In þat time non feirer nas.
1285 At hir fader sche bad a bone
& he hir graunted swiþe sone:
Sche asked him sone anon
Al þo þat to deþ schuld gon,
& dede hir come schippes swiþe
1290 For out of lond sche wold driue,
& er it come to þre dayes ende
Out of lond sche wold wende.
Gode schipes þai diȝte hem hastily
Þre [s]core bi tale & fifti.
1295 Mete & drink þai had non,
Þerfore þai made miche mon;
Þo þai to schipp gun go
Miche folk for hem was wo.
Winde þai hadde gode, apliȝt,
1300 & seylde boþe day & niȝt;
In Michel Breteyne þai gun riue
& out of schip þai went bliue.
Tiding to þe king it sprong
Þat miche folk was comen on his lond.
1305 ¶ Þe king went him þider anon
To se þo maidens euerichon.
Þe king seyd wiþ glad chere,
'Welcome be þou, maiden, here.'
& sche answerd in hir language,
1310 'Trauaile somes par mere sauage
Enfebli somes de graunt feym
Kar y nous defaut vin & peyn
Ore e argent aseȝ auoms
Puruiaunce de ceo feroms
1315 De vostre seygnorie prioms endos
En vostre reume auer repos.'
As michel lond sche bad him at nede
As a bul hide miȝt ouersprede.
Þe king graunted hir þat bone.
1320 A þwong-castel sche made sone,
& now men clepeþ it bi þis day [**fol. 311va**]
Horncastel in Lindesay,
& who so wil þider gon
Þe walles he may sen of ston.
1325 & when þe castel was made
Þe king to þe mete sche bade.
Þe king graunted hir anon;
He nist nouȝt what sche wald don.
When þe king was þennes went

		1330	Þe maiden after hir men sent.
			Sche seyd to hem in þis maner,
			‘Þe king tomorwe schal ete here,
			& he & al his men;
			Euer on of ous anoþer of hem
		1335	Togider schul we sitten atte mete.
			& when we han almest y-ete
			Y schal say ‘wessayl’ to þe king
			& slen him, wiþouten lesing;
			& loke þat ichon of ȝou in þis maner
		1340	Wiþouten delay sle his fer.
			In swiche maner wroȝten he;
			Þai slouȝ þe king & his meyne.
			& after hir name, ich vnderstond,
			Sche cleped þis lond Jnglond
	¶ Seþþe a non sone & suiþe ·	1345	Seþþe anon sone & swiþe
	Was Engelond deled afyue ·		Inglond was delt afiue,
	To uyf kynges treweliche		To fiue kinges treweliche
	Þat were suiþe riche ·		Þat wer noble & swiþe riche.
345	¶ Þat on hade to his partie		Þat o king hadde þe lond of Kent
	Þat lond of Kent þat is so druye ·	1350	Þat is noble & swiþe gent,
	Ant tueie bischopes in ys lond ·		& in his lond bischopes tvay,
	Wel hy were beyne yfond ·		Noble men for soþ to say:
	Þe erchebischop of Canterbu*ri* ·		Þe erchebischop of Canterbiri
350	Ant of Roucest*re* þat ys mury ·		& he of Rouchester þat is so miri.
	¶ Þe kyng of Esex wes riche mon ·	1355	¶ Þe king of Esex was riche man,
	He hade to ys portion		He hadde to his porcian
	Wyltechire Barkschyre ·		Al Wiltschire [&] Barrocschire,
	Southsex Southamteschyre [**fol. 64rb**]		Souþesex, Souþhamtonschire.
355	Sothereye Somerseteschyre		
	Derseteschire & Deueneschire		Þilk king hadde in his lond
	Ant þerto al Cornwayle	1360	Fiue bischopes riche & strong:
	Ant in is lond sauntȝ fayle		Of Salesbiri was þat an,
	He hade vyf bischopes riche		He was a swiþe gode man,
360	Me nuste no wer here yliche ·		At Cridington was his se
	Of Salesbury wes þat on ·		& now at Salesbiri is he;
	He wes a suyþe iolyf mon ·	1365	Þilke of Baþe he hadde also, [**fol. 311vb**]
	At Schryrebourne wes þo þe se ·		
	Ant nou at Salesbur*i* ys he ·		
365	Þe bischop of Welles al so		Þat at Welles wonede þo;
	Þat at Bathe wonede þo		
	Þe Bischop of Wynchestre		Þilke of Chichester & of Winchester,
	Ant þe bischop of Chychestre		
	Ant of Exetre also		& eke þe bischop of Excester
370	Þilke was deled a tuo ·		Þe fift was, wiþouten feyle,
	Þat on at Credynton sauntȝ faile		
	Þat oþer at Sein Germeyn in Cornwaile ·	1370	At Seyn Jermain in Cornewaile.
	¶ Þe kyng of Merkyneriche		¶ Þe king of Merken merche,
	Nes þer non ys yliche ·		Þer nas non to him yliche.
375	He hade Gloucestreschire		He hadde Gloucesterschir & Pinokschire,
	Wyrcestreschyre ant Warewikeschire		Worþcesterschire, Warwikeschire,
	Staffordschire & Chesterschire	1375	Staforþschire & Derbischire,
	Derbeschire & Schropschire		Chesterschire, Schropschire,
	Al þe march & Herefordschire		Al þe Marche Herforþschire,
380	Oxnefordschire & Bokynghame		Oxenforþschire, Bokinghamschire,
	Hertfordschire & Hontindone ·		

	Northamteschire & Leycestre		Norhamtonschire, Leycesterschire,
	Lyncolneschire þat ys betre	1380	Lincolnschire [&] Notinghamschire.
	Ant þe Schire of Noting*ha*m		& in his lond þat was so miche
385	Rykemondeschire nis nout to blam ·		He hadde four bischopes riche:
	Ant in is lond þat wes so muche		Þilke of Lincoln & of Chester
	Ha hade four bischopes riche		& of Herforþ & of Worcester.
	Of Lyncolne & of Cest*re*		
	Of Hereford ~~&~~ ant of Wyncestre		
390	¶ Þe kyng þat wes of Estengle sire	1385	¶ Þe king of hest lond was sire.
	He hade Grauntebruggeschyre [**fol. 64va**]		He hadde Grauntebrigeschire,
	Norfolk & Bedefordschyre ·		Norþfolk & Bedeforþschire
			Hertforþschire & Blakinburnschire
			Suþfolk & Huntingdunschire
	Loncastel & Blakebourneschire	1390	Lancastre & Richemond schire,
	Ant yn ys lond bischopes þre		& in his lond bischopes þre,
395	Noble coynte large & fre ·		Noble men curteys & fre:
	Of London & of Norwik		Þe bischop of Londen & of Norwike
	Ant þe bischop of Ely eke		& þe bischop of Ely eke.
	¶ Þe kyng of Norþhumberlonde	1395	¶ Þe king of Norþhumberlond
	Hade al þe lond ichonderstonde		Hadde al þe lond, ich vnderstond,
400	Bituene a water þat hatte homber		Bitvix a water men clepeþ Humber
	Ant Scotlond þer yt urneþ under		& Scotlond þat erneþ þervnder,
	Ant in is lond bischopes tuo		& in his lond bischopes þre,
	Grete lordinges were bo ·	1400	Alle curteys & fre:
	Þe erchebischop of Euerwike		Þe erchebischop of Euerwike,
405	Ant þe bischop of Durham eke ·		Þilke of Durhem & of Carlel eke.
	¶ Þus wes Englond to deled		
	Ant uch kyng from oþer dreued ·		
	So þat euer þe strengore ·		So þat euer þe strenger
	Ouercome þe feblore ·		Ouercom þe febler
410	Ant euer þe richore	1405	& euer þe richer
	Ouercom þe porore ·		Ouercom þe pouerer
	Þ o com Kyng Egbriȝt ·		Euer fort þat Edriȝt
	Ant wiþ batayle & fyht		Stabled Jnglond wiþ fiȝt.
			He made þe reawme hole & sounde [**fol. 312ra**]
		1410	Þurth dent of swerd & deþes wounde.
	Made al Englond yhol ·		Al Jnglond to him he wan
415	Ffalle to ys oune dol ·		Ac er died mani a man.
			Seyn Fromond & Kenelmi bo
			In þat bateyl wer slawe þo.
		1415	Kenelmin lay in Cowdale .xl. ȝer þer in grounde
			& ȝete his heued spac in þat stounde;
			To lewed men þo spac þat heued,
			'Her liþ Kenelmi ybiried.'
			Fromond at Donstaple schewed is,
		1420	Kenelmin at Winchecoumbe, ywis.
	Ant seþe he reignede her		¶ Edriȝt regned here
	[Ahter] tuenti ffolle ȝer		Four & tventi ful ȝer.
	At Wynchest*er* lyggeþ ys bon ·		A[t] Winchester liþe his bon
	Biried in a marbelston ·		Ybiride in a marbel ston.
420	[A]**A**fter him Ethelwolf ys sone ·	1425	After him regned Edulf, his sone.
	Hade þis lond al & some ·		He hadde his londes al & some.
			Edulf jn his time sone
			Went to þe court of Rome,
			Þer he woned wiþ þe Pope.
		1430	He dede his lond litel note,

He hade sones fyue
Er he partede of þisse liue ·
¶ Þe eldeste hatte Athelston
425 He wes a suiþe iolyf mon ·
¶ Þat oþer hatte Eylbryth
He wes a staleworþe knyht
¶ Þe þridde hatte Achelband
Jn werre he made mani saut
430 ¶ Þe furþe hatte Achelred · [**fol. 64vb**]
¶ Þe fyhte hatte Alured ·
¶ Ethelwolf in ys time sone
Wende to þe court of rome
Þer he wonede wiþ þe pope
435 Ant dudo ys lond litte note
Ffor he arerede of ys lond her
Þre hondred besaunȝ uche ȝer,
Þat on he ȝef to arere þe lyht
Of Seint Peter apostel bryht
440 ¶ Seþe he ȝef þat oþer
To Seint Poul ys broþer
Þe þridde he ȝef, saunȝ fayle
To þe selue apostoyle ·
ȝet he dude more qued
445 Ethelwolf er he were ded ·
Jn Englond he arerede a loke
Of uche hous þ*at* come smoke
To Rome ȝef a peny ywis
¶ Þat Petres peny cleped ys
450 Ethelwolf on þat maner
Wonede at Rome þre ȝer
seþe he com hol & sound
Bi praute toward Englonde ·
Ant weddede þer a swete þyng
455 Charles dohter þe grete kyng

For he arered a costome her:
Þre hundred pounde ich ȝer,
Þat o hundred to store þe liȝt
Of Seynt Peter, þe Pope briȝt,
1435 & he ȝaf þat oþer
To Seyn Poule, his broþer;
Þe þridde he ȝaf, saunfail,
To þe selue apostolie.
ȝete he dede more qued:
1440 Edulf, er he wer dede,
Of Jnglond he rered a lok
Of ich hous þat come out smoke,
To Rome ȝif a peni, ywis.
Þat Rome Peni cleped is.
1445 Edulf in þat maner
Liued at Rome seuen ȝer,
& seþþe he com hole & sounde
Þurth Fraunce towar[d] Jnglond
& weded þer a swete þing,
1450 Charles douhter þe riche king.
Damisel Ediþ was hir name,
Michel sche loued solas & game.
Þilke Edulf wan bi his wiife [**fol. 312rb**]
Fiue sones bi his liue:
1455 Þeldest hiȝt Aþelstan,
He was a swiþe gode man;
Þat oþer hiȝt Aþelbriȝt,
He was a stalworþ kniȝt;
Þe þridde hiȝt Aþelwalt,
1460 In wer he made mani saut;
Þe ferþ hiȝt Achelred,
Þe fift king Alfred.

	Dame Judyth wes hire nome ·		
	Muche he louede gle & gome ·		
	Þo he com to londe her		Þo Edulf come to þis lond here
	Ne lyuede he bote tuo ȝer		He no liued bo[t] tvo ȝer.
460	At þe hyde of Wynchestre	1465	At Hide of Winchester liþe his bon
	Were [his] bones don in cheste		Biloken in a marbel ston.
	[A]**A**fter him regned Achelred ·		After him regned Achelred;
	Jn ys time er he were ded		In his time, her he wer ded,
	Com þe kyng of Denemarche		Com þe king of Danma[r]k,
465	Wiþ is host stor & starke	1470	Hauelok þat was strong & stark,
	Englond to by wynne		Al Jnglond to winne
	Ant sle þat þer weren ynne		& sle þat þer wer inne.
	Ah Achelred & Alured bo		Achelred & Alfred bo
	Connen her meto suo ·		Hem gun þer ymete so
470	Þat in a litel wyhte stounde [**fol. 65ra**]	1475	Þat in a litel stounde
	Þe Deneys hy fellen to grounde		Þe Danismen wer feld to grounde.
	After þat bataille seue ȝer		¶ After þat batayle seuen ȝer
	Achelred wes kyng her		Achelred regned here.
	At Wybourne mustre ywis		At Wobourn abeye is write, ywis,
475	Hys body ybiried ys	1480	His gode body ybirid is.
	[A]**A**fter him regnede Alured		After him regned king Alfred,
	Þe wiseste kyng þat euer et bred ·		Þe wisest man þat euer ete brede.
	He wes boþe war & wys		
	Ant a mon of muche pris		He was a man of miche pris,
			Of al þing he was wiis.
480	He made þourth Godes sonde	1485	For he made þurth Godes sond
	Þe lawes in Engelonde		Þe gode lawes in Jnglond.
	Ant seþe he regnede her		
	Four an tuenti folle ȝer		
	At seint Poules liggeþ is bon		
485	Buried in a marbreston ·		
	Þilke kyng Alured		Þilke king Alfred
	Slepte litel in ys bed ·		Slepe wel litel in his bed.
	Þenne he hade t*ra*uail muche ·		For soþe, he hadde trauail miche,
	Ȝe mowe wel here wuche	1490	Anon ichil ȝou tel whiche.
490	Þe xxiij tiden ariht		Þe four & tventi tiden ariȝt
	Þat beoþ in þe day & nyht		Þat ben in þe day & niȝt
	¶ Þilke he delede on þreo		Þilke he deled on þre.
	Wel he bisette þeo ·		Ful wele he bisett þe:
	Þe viij he spende ase mon mai rede	1495	Þe eyȝte he spent as men nede
495	Jn beden & ys ahnesdede ·		In bedes & in almosdede;
	¶ Þat oþer viij ys body to reste		Þe oþer eyȝte his bodi to rest; [**fol. 312va**]
	Þe þridde viij were þe beste		Þe þridde eyȝte wer þe best,
	Þilke he spende saunt dotaunce		Þilke he spended, saun dotaunce,
	Aboute þoht & p*ur*ueaunce	1500	About þouȝt & puruiaunce,
500	Hou he myhte hi*m* wise & rede		Hou he miȝt him wis & rede,
	Ant ys lond ariht lede ·		His lond ariȝt for to lede.
	¶ He heuede amon in hys chapele ·		He hadde a man in his chapel
	Þat þus þis tiden con dele ·		Þus his tides he gan dele
	He made þre candlen by wyht	1505	He made þre candels, bi wiȝt,
505	Þat schulde berne day & nyht		Þat schuld bren day & niȝt.
	When þe on condle wes ydo ·		When þat o candel was ydo
	Þe viij tiden weren al suo ·		Þe eyȝte tide was also.
	Þe kyng he warnede by þon		Þe king he warned bi þan
	Hys purpos ariht to don · [**fol. 65rb**]	1510	His riȝt purpos for to don.
510	Þe riht wise Alured kyng		¶ Þe wise Alfred þe king

	Ʒet he dude more þyng		ȝete he dede more þing:
	Al his ryhte trewe purchas		Al his riȝt trewe purchas
	To poure abbeyes ȝef þas		He ȝaf to pouer abbeys at þat cas;
	Hys rentes he delede a tuo	1515	His rentes he delt euen a tvo -
515	Ne worþe neuer ys soule wo		Ne worþ neuer his soule wo.
	Þe haluedel þenne a þreo ·		Þe haluendel he delt a þre,
	Wel he bisette þeo		Ful wele he bisett þe:
	Þat on partie he ȝef hem		Þat o parti he ȝaf hem
	Þat in ys court serueden hym	1520	Þat in his court serued him,
520	Þat oþer he ȝef yþe stude		Þat oþer parti he ȝaf þenne
	To þilke þat his werkes dude		To vncouþe pouer menne.
	Þe þridde part he ȝef þenne		
	To unto þe poure menne ·		
	Seþe he delede feirer & wel ·		¶ Seþþe he delt fair & wel
525	¶ On foure þat oþer haluedel ·		O four þat oþer haluendel.
	Þat on p*ar*ti he sende by sonde	1525	Þat o parti he sent bi sond
	To þilke þat were poure in londe		To pouer men in his lond;
	Þat oþer to poure religiouns		Þat oþer to religions
	Þe þridde to poure cleregouns		& to pouer clergions;
530	Þat oþer partie þenne ȝef he		Þe ferþe parti þan ȝaf he
	To poure chirgen byȝende þe se ·	1530	To pouer spitels biȝond þe se.
	Þus liuede þe gode Alured ·		Þus liued þe gode Alfred
	Euer forte he were ded ·		Euer til he was ded.
			He regned viii & xx ȝer
			To seyn Poules men him bere.
	[A]**A**fter þe gode Alured kyng	1535	After þe gode Alfred þe king
535	Regnede Edward ys sone ȝyng		Regned Edward his sone ȝing.
	He was boþe war ant wys		He was boþe war & wiis,
	Jn uch bataille he hade þe p*ri*s		In ich batayle he hadde þe priis.
	Þare fore þe folke of Denemarche		Þerfore þe folk of Danmark,
	Þat beþ boþe stor & starke ·	1540	Þat wer boþe stout & stark,
540	Of him were a dred sofore		Of hym þai wer agast sore, [**fol. 312vb**]
	Þat in ys time neuer more ·		Þat in his time neuer more
	Ne dorsten he comen in ys londe		No durst þai com into þis lond
	Leste hem tidde schome & schonde		Lest hem tit harm or schond.
	¶ Þilke Edward hade in is lyues	1545	¶ Þilke Edward hadde in his liue
545	xiiij children by þre wyues		Fourten children bi þre wiue:
	ix dehtren & v sones		Eyȝte douhtren & fiue sones,
	Þat were suiþe feyre gomes [**fol. 65va**]		Þat were swiþe fair gomes.
	Of ys dehtren þre wymmen		Of his douhtren, þre wimen
	To religioun ȝolden hem	1550	To religioun ȝolden hem.
550	¶ Alfled hatte þat on louedy		Alfled hete þat o leuedi,
	He wes abbesse at Romeysy		Sche was abbesse of Romesi;
	¶ Ediht hatte þat oþer may		Ediþ hete þat oþer may,
	He wes abbesse at Wilton abbai ·		Sche was abbesse a[t] Wilton abbay;
	¶ Þe þridde hatte Anbourh	1555	Þe þridde hiȝt seynt Albourth,
555	An holi wommon þourh & þourh		An holi woman þurth & þurth;
	¶ Edward hede a soster fre		Þe ferþe soster, gent & fre,
	No feirore leuedy myhte be ·		Non fairer leuedi no miȝt be,
	Ne wisore of fele þyng		Ne wiser in al þing.
	He huelp hire broþer Edward kyng ·	1560	Sche halpe hir broþer Edward þe king,
560	Wiþ hire wyt & hire rede		Wiþ hir witt & wiþ hir rede,
	His lond wel forto lede		His lond ariȝt for to lede,
			Þe gode lawes for to hold,
			Oȝain his enemis bold.
	Longe er þe kyng were ded	1565	& ar hir broþer was ded

	He wes ȝeue to þe erl Aylred ·		Sche was ȝouen to þerl Alfred,
	Þat wes a god holy mon ·		Þat was a gode holy man.
565	Ant on ys wif a child he won		On his wiif a child he wan,
	Þe leuedy pinede so fore		
	Er þat child were ybore		Ac er þat child ybore was,
		1570	Þat leuedi, briȝt so ani glas,
			So hard schoures com hir opon
			Þat ded sche wend haue ben anon.
	Þat in hire pine he wes so wroht		In hir anguis sche was wroþ
	Þat he suor & made hire oht		& ȝaf a ȝift & swore hir oþ
570	Bi þe verto of Marie sone	1575	Bi Ihesu, seynt Mari sone,
	Neuermore he nolde come		Þat sche neuer wald come
	By hire lyve nyht ne day		In þat bed, niȝt no day,
	Jn þe bed þer hire lord lay		To ligge þer hir lord lay.
	Edward reignede her		¶ Edward king regned her
575	Vour & tuenti folle ȝer ·	1580	Four & tventi ful ȝer.
	At Winchest*re* liggeþ ys bon		At Winchester liþ his bon
	Biried in a marbreston ·		Wel fair in a marbel ston.
	[A]**A**fter him reignede Achelston		After him regned king Aþelston,
	God knyht & an hardi mon ·		A gode kniȝt & an hardi mon,
580	Boþe by day & by nyht	1585	Boþe bi day & bi niȝt. [**fol. 313ra**]
	Wel he hueld his lond to ryht		Wele he held his lond in riȝt.
	Gui of Warewyke liuede þo		
	Ant gode knyhtes fele mo		
	Alle þe þeynes of Walschelonde		Al þe kniȝtes of Wales lond
585	He made bowe to ys honde		He made hem bowe to his hond;
	Ant leyde such t*ru*age on hem [**fol. 65vb**]		He leyd swiche trowage on hem
	Ant on h[e]ore Walschemen	1590	& on al þe Walismen
	Þat þre hondred pond of sterlyng		Þat þre hundred pounde of sterling
	Heo ȝeuen Athelston þe kyng		Þai ȝouen to Aþelston þe king,
590	And eke tuenti pound of golde		& eke tventi pounde of gold.
	Scot[e]lond hym ȝeue scholde		Scotlond him ȝeld sold,
	ȝet Wales ȝeld more hym	1595	ȝete Wales ȝelt more [to] him:
	Fif þousent fatte eun ·		Fif þousand of fat kin
	To þe kyng uche ȝer		To þe king iche ȝere
595	Er he mosten be quite & sker		Er þai most be quic & skere.
	¶ Þilke kyng Athelston		Þilke king Aþelston
	Heue a soster so fair wommon ·	1600	Hadde a soster white so swan.
	Þat in þis world me unste non		In al þe warld men wist non
	So feir leuedy of fleysche & bon		So fair a leuedi of flesche & bon.
600	Hylde hatte þat maide fre ·		Ilde hiȝt þat maiden fre,
	Þat haþ so muche of beaute		Þat hadde so michel of beaute,
	Hughe þat [kyng] in [F*ra*nce] [wes]		
	Þis maide to quene ches		
		1605	Men nist non in þis kingriche,
			Leuedi of beaute hir liche.
			Þe king of Fraunce, þat hiȝt Howe,
			Herd tel of þat maiden trowe
	For heo wes so few & hende		Þat was so fair & so hende,
605	After hire he con sende	1610	& after hir he gan sende
	Þe eorl Edulf of Boloyne		Þerl Edulf of Boloyne,
	Þe erles sone Baldwyn of coloyne		Þerles sone Baldwine of Coloine.
	He wes þe kynges messager		He was þe kinges messanger
	Jn his neodes fer & ner		In his lond fer & ner.
610	Þo he was to londe ycome	1615	Þo he was to þis lond ycome
	He fond þe kyng at Abyndon		Þe king he fond at Abindone.

	Þo he þe kyng ymette		Þer þe king he mett
	Wel feire he hyne grette ·		& swiþe fair he him gret.
	A noble present he him brohte		A noble present he him brouȝt
615	Ant of ys soster hi*m* bysohte	1620	& of his soster him bisouȝt
	To ys lord Hugh þe kyng		To his lord þe king
	Þat wes in F*ra*nce wonyng		Þat is in Fraunce woniing.
	Ant from hi*m* verreiment		& fro him verrament
	He brohte a riche present		He brouȝt a noble present
620	Þat wes p*re*cious & deore	1625	Þat was precious & dere.
	Wuch hit wes ȝe mowe here		Wiche it was ȝe mow now here:
	¶ Þre hondred steden mylk whyte		C. c. c. hundred stedes milke white,
	Jn þe world nys heore ylyche ·		In al þis world nas her like.
	Þe bridles were for þe nones [**fol. 66ra**]		Þe bridles wer for þe nones [**fol. 313rb**]
625	Bygo wiþ preciouse stones	1630	Ful of precious stones.
	ȝet he presentede him al so		ȝete he present him also
	Oþer þinges fele mo ·		Oþer riches mani mo:
	Þemp*er*oures suerd costantin		Þemperour swerd Costentin,
	Þe scauberk wes gold pur & fin		Þe schawberk was of gold fin,
630	Þer inne wes closed a nail gret	1635	Þerin was closed a nail gret
	Þat ede þurth Godes fet ·		Þat was ydriuen þurth Godes fet.
	Ant he presenede hi*m* þe sp*er*e		¶ ȝete he present him þe spere
	Þat Charlomayne wes wonet to bere		Þat Charlmain was won to bere
	To fore þe holy legioun		
635	Þat is of gret remissioun		
			Oȝaines Sarraȝines jn bataile.
		1640	Mani swore & seyd, saunfaile,
			Þat wiþ þat spere smert
			Ihesu was stongen to þe hert.
			ȝete he present him, ywis,
			Þe baner of seyn Moris
		1645	Þat he was won to bere
			Oȝain þe Sarraȝines here,
	Ant o p*ar*ti [of þe] holy rode		& a parti of þe holy crois
	Þat God schedde on ys blode		
	Hit wes closed feir & wel		
	In a c*ri*stal euer uch del ·		In a cristal don inclos,
640	Ant þre of þe þornes kene		& þre of þe þornes kene
	Þat were on Godes hed sene ·	1650	Þat were in Godes heued y wene,
	Ant one riche croune of golde		& a riche croun of gold -
	No richore · king were ne scholde		Non richer king wer no schold -
	Biset wiþ inne & wiþ oute		Ymaked wiþin & wiþout
645	Wiþ precious stones al aboute		Wiþ precious stones al about.
		1655	To make frendes þat wer fon
	Richore croune nos neuer wroth		A better croun nas neuer non
			To non erþelich man ywrouȝt
	Seþe God made þe world of noth ·		Seþþe þis warld was made of nouȝt.
	¶ Athelston of þis sonde wes blyþe		¶ King Aþelston was glad & bliþe
	Ant þonkede þe king of F*ra*unce suyþe	1660	& þonke þe king of Fraunce swiþe
			Of þis ȝiftes noble & riche.
650	His soster hilde he hi*m* sende		
	Mid gret honour wiþ hire he wende		
			In al þis warld was non swiche.
			In Aþelstonis time, ich vnderstond,
			Was Gij of Warwike in Jnglond
		1665	& for Aþelston he dede a bateyle
			Wiþ a geaunt gret, saunfaile.

			Þe geaunt hiȝt Colbro[n]d,
			Gy him slouȝ wiþ his hond.
			At Winchester þe bataile was don
		1670	& seþþe dede Gij neuer non.
	Seue ȝer kyng Aþelston xx		Seuen ȝer king Aþelston
	xx [Ak aso reggeþ sonne oþer		
	Edmund wes Achelstones broþer]		
	Hueld þis ilke kynedom		Held þis iche kingdom.
	Engelond þat is so muri		In Jnglond þat is so miri [**fol. 313va**]
655	Ant deȝede & liþ at Malmesburi		He dyed & liþ at Malmesbiri.
	[A]**A**fter him his sone Edmond	1675	After him regned Edmund his sone
	Wes her kyng in Engelond		Ac sone his liif was him binome,
	Ah he ne regnede her		For he no liued here
	Bote vnneþe syx ȝere ·ix·		Bot vnneþ þre ȝere.
660	¶ Seþe byfel at one feste		Seþþe bifel at on fest
	At Caunterb*ur*y a cas vnwreste	1680	At Caunterbiri þat was vnwrest.
	Ase þe kyng at mete seet [**fol. 66rb**]		As þe king atte mete sat
	He biheld & underȝeet		He biheld & vnderȝat
	Of a þef þat wes degised ·		Of a þef þat was degise
665	Among his knyȝtes hende & wyse		Among his kniȝtes hende & wise.
	Þe king wes hastif & starte up	1685	Þe king was stef & stirt vp
	Ant hente þe þef by þe top ·		& hent þe þef bi þe top
	Ant caste hi*m* doun to þe ston		& cast þe þef to þe ston.
	Þe þef braid out is knyf anon		Þe þef breyd out a kniif anon,
670	Ant to þe heorte þe kyng he þruste		To þe hert þe king he þrest
	Er eni of ys knihtes wyste	1690	Er ani of his kniȝtes it wist.
	Þe Lordinges starten up uchon		Þe barouns stirt vp anon
	Ant þe þef slowen anon ·		& slouȝ þe þef swiþe son
	Ah raþere he woundede mani on		Ac raþer he wounded mani on
675	Þourh þe flesich to þe bon ·		Þurth þe flesche into þe bon.
	¶ To Glastunb*ir*i me ber þe kyng	1695	To G[l]astinbiri men bar þe king
	Ant made þer ys buryyng		& þer made his biriing.
	[A]**A**fter þat Edmond wes ded		After Edmund, when he was ded,
	Reygnede his sone Athelred ·		Regned his sone Athelred;
680	A war mon ant a wys		
	Ant a knyht of muche p*ri*s		Ac he no regned here
	He reignede nyȝe ȝer viij	1700	Bot vnneþe tvo ȝer.
	Ant wes yburied at Westminster		
	Þ o anon after hym		¶ & sone anon after him
685	Reignede ys sone Edwyn ·		Regned his sone Edwin.
	He wes king of gret p*ri*s		He was a man of swiþe gret pris,
	Ah of is bodi he wes vnwys ·		Bot of his bodi he was nouȝt wiis.
	Þe furste dai þat c*ro*une nom	1705	Þe first day þat he croun nam
	He birafte a gode mon ·		He bireft a ful gode man
690	Of ys wif for hire feirhede ·		Of his wiif for hir fairhed -
	Of God he hade littel drede ·		Of Crist he hadde litel mede -
	Ȝet heo wes his cosine		& þei sche was his cosyn.
	Þe fore he seruede more pyne ·	1710	Þerfore he suffred þe more pine.
	¶ He reignedi four ȝer v		¶ He regned tvelue ȝer,
695	To Wynchest*er* me hi*m* ber		To Winchester men him ber.
	[A]**A**fter hi*m* reigned Edgar		After him regned seynt Edgar,
	A wys kyng & a war		A wise king & a war.
	Boþe by day & by nyht		
	Welhe hueld ys lond to ryth		
700	Þilke nyht þat he was ybore [**fol. 66va**]	1715	Þilke niȝt þat he was bore
	Sei*nt* Dunstan wes glad þer fore		Seyn Dunston was glad þerfore

	Ffor he herde þe steuene		For he herd þe steuen [**fol. 313vb**]
	Of þe aungles of heuene		Of angels þat were in heuen
	Jn heore song segge by ryme		In her song bi rime:
705	Yblessed be þat ilke time	1720	‘Blisced be þat time
	Þat Edgar ybore wes		Þat Edgar y born wes,
	Ffor in ys time schal beo pees		For in his time schal be pes
	Euer in his kynedom		Euermore in his kingdom
	Whil he lyueþ & seint Dunstan ·		Þer while he liues & seyn Dunston.’
710	Ant so þer wes gret forsoun	1725	& so þer was gret fousoun
	Of alle gode in vcha toun ·		Of mete & dring in euerich toun
	Ffor rich wirfore kyng þen he was		
	Neuerȝete ybore nas		
	For alle þe whyle þat laste is lyf		Of al þe time þat lest his liif.
715	Louede he nouþer werre ne strif ·		
	Ne mon þer nas non so heh		
	Þat mysdude feor oþer neh		
	Jn ys lond day oþer nyht		
	Aȝeynes þe laghe eni wyht		
720	Þat he schulde songe mede		
	After þe selue misdede		
			No loued he noiþer fiȝt no striif:
			Þer nas man non so heye,
		1730	In his lond fer no neye,
			Þat tre[s]passed bi day or niȝt,
			Oȝain þe lawe ani wiȝt,
			He schuld fong his mede
			Riȝt after þe selue dede.
	Hou schulde he sp*er*e eni mon	1735	Hou schuld he spare ani man
	Wen he of bestes wrache nom ·		When he of bestes wreche nam?
	¶ At Londone he hueld a p*ar*lement		¶ At Londen he made a parlement
725	Whareþurh Wales wes yschent		Wharþurth he was to Wales went.
	Ffor þider to hi*m* he made come		Þider he made to him come
	Þe þeynes of Wales alle & some	1740	Þe Walis kniȝtes, al & some,
	Him t*re*we lord forþo holde ·		Him to swere oþes hold
	Ant to sueren hi*m* oþes holde ·		& for her lord held him schold,
730	Ant bringen hi*m* t*ru*age þer		& him to bring present þere,
	Þre houndred wolues vche ȝer		Þre hundred wolues ich ȝere;
	Ant so hy dude t*re*weliche	1745	& so þai dede treweliche
	Þre ȝer pleuerelyche		Þre ȝer pleynerliche.
	Þe furþe ne mihte finde none		Þe ferþe ȝer no fond þai non,
735	So clene he weren alle agone		So clene þai wer al agon,
	Ant þo þe king hit he*m* foȝ ȝef		& þe king it hem forȝeue.
	Ne dude he*m* no more gref	1750	He nold hem nomore greue.
	¶ Edgar wes an holy mon		¶ Edgar was a gode holy man
	Þat oure lord hi*m* cuþe con		Þat our lord him kepe gan.
740	Afterward ase he wes wurthe [**fol. 66vb**]		After þat he was werþe
	Þat he hade leyen in vrþe		& þat he had liue in erþe
	Sixti wynter vnder molde	1755	Sexti winter vnder mold
	An abbot him reune wolde		An abbot him take vp schold;
	Aylward hihte þilke abbot		Ailward hete þilke abbot.
745	Ase me wolde hi*m* nymen vp		As he walde take him vp
	Ant leggen in a þroh of ston		& legge him in a þrouwe of ston,
	He founden him boþe fleys & bon	1760	He fond him wiþ flesch & bon
	Al so hol & al so sound		Also hole & also sounde [**fol. 314ra**]
	Ase he was leyd furst in ground ·		So he was leyd ferst in grounde.
750	Hy nomen him up anon		Þai nome him vp anon

	Ant wolden him leggen in þe ston ·		& wald legge him in a ston
	Þat þe abbot heuede ilet make	1765	Þat þe abbot lete make
	Ffor þe nones to his sake		For anour & for his sake.
	Ah so schert he was ywrouht		Al to schort it was ywrouȝt;
755	Sstraht ne myhte he legge noht		Þerin miȝt he legge nouȝt.
	Hys legges hy coruen of anon ·		His legges þai koruen of anon
	Faste by þe kneobon	1770	Fast bi þe kne bon
	Ah hy hit ne dude for non harm		Ac þai no dede it for non harm
	Ant þe blod also warm		Ac þe blod also warm
760	Hem starte out opon ·		As hot stert hem opon
	Ase hit were a q*ui*c mon ·		As he were a quic man.
	Þe abbot þat þer by stod	1775	¶ Þabbot þat þer bistode,
	Seh þat miracle feir & god		He seye þe miracle feyr & gode,
	Ant lette hi*m* in a tounbe don		He lete him in a schrine don
765	Boþe in fleys & in bon ·		Boþe wiþ flesche & wiþ bon,
	Ase me him in tounbe dude		& as men him in schrine dede
	A wodmon botnede y þe stude	1780	Mani man hadde bot in þat stede.
	Ant a blindmon hede fihte		
	Ant mihte seon sinþe bryhte		
770	Ant a q*u*ell eke anon		
	Þer him st*ra*uhte & myhte gon		
	¶ Edgar reigned her		
	Euene sixtene ȝer		
			At Glastinbiri, for soþe ywis,
			Seynt Edgar schrined is.
	Þ o he wes ded afterward		
775	Reygnede hys sone Edward		After him regned Edward his sone
	Ah he ne reignede her		Sone his liif was him binome,
		1785	For he no regned here
	Bote vnnethe þre ȝer		Bot vnneþe þre ȝer
	Þat Estryld his stepmoder		For Estirnild his stepmoder -
	Selde beþ þer eny gode		Seld be þer ani gode -
780	Him apoisonede þat he was ded ·		ȝaf him pousoun, þat he was ded,
	To maken hire sone Achelred ·	1790	To make hir sone Achelred
	Her king in Engelonde [**fol. 67ra**]		King to be in Jnglond;
	Ant so he wes wiþ schoume & schonde		& so he was, wiþ schame & schond,
	Ffor neu*r* pes in is time nas		For in his time no pes nas
785	Bote whil sein Dunstan aliue was ·		Bot while seyn Dunston aliue was.
	¶ Þe king hede a steward	1795	Þe king hadde a steward
	Þat wes a fel & culuard ·		Þat was a feloun coward,
	He was cleped Edrich		His nam was yhoten Edriche.
	Nes no t*ra*itour his ylich		Nas neuer treytour to him yliche;
790	He was finkel fals & fel ·		He was fals & fikel & fel,
	Ant þat þe king hi*m* louede wel	1800	& for þe king him loued wel
	Ant tolde him his conseil ·		& told him al his conseyl,
	Ant þe t*ra*itour vchadel		Þe traitour hit wrot sau[n]fail
	Sende hit to [D]enemarke		& sent it into Danmark
795	By messangers stor & starke		Wiþ messangers strong & stark.
	H aueloc com þo to þis lond ·	1805	Þe Danismen com into þis lond [**fol. 314rb**]
	Wiþ gret host & eke strong ·		Wiþ her ost gret & strong
	Ant sloh þe kyng Achelred		& slouȝ þe king Achelred;
	At Westm*in*stre he was ded ·		At Westminster he was ded.
800	Ah he heuede reigned her		
	Sevene ant tuenti fulle ȝer		
	A nt ȝet þe Englische ofte ilome		ȝete þe Jnglische oft ylome
	Þourh bataile þe Deneis ou*er*come	1810	Wiþ bateyl þe Danis ouercome,

	Ant crouneden at North*a*mpton		& crouned at Norhamtone
805	Edmund Achelredes sone		Seint Edmund, Achelred sone.
	Ffor is prouesse & his streynþe		For his prouwes & his strengþe -
	He wes a brede & o leinþe		He was a brede & a lengþe -
	Cleped ȝent þis lond wide	1815	Cleped in al þis lond wide
	¶ Edmund Jrueneside ·		Edmund wiþ þe yren side.
810	ȝet in þe somer afterward		¶ Riȝt in þe somer afterward
	Come þe deneise hiderward ·		Comeþ þe Danismen hiderward
	Ant come fihte wiþ Edmound		& gun fiȝt wiþ seynt Edmond
	Þat was king in Engelond	1820	Þat her was king in Jnglond.
	One heo hi*m* ou*er*come		Ones þai him ouercome
815	Ant he hem eft sone		& he hem ofsent sone
	So Þat heo acordeden		Þat hij acordeden
	Ant þis lond to deleden ·		& þis lond todeleden
	Riht euene a tuo [**fol. 67rb**]	1825	Riȝt fulliche euen atvo
	Bituene þe kynges þo		Bitven þe tvay kinges þo
820	Þour consail of Edrich		Þurth þe conseyl of Edriche -
	Nes neu*er* *tra*itour him ylich		Traitour was neuer non swiche.
	Seþe deȝede Edmound		& seþþe dyed seynt Emon
	Þourh Edriches t*re*soun	1830	Þurth Edriches tresoun.
	Ah he ne heuede yreined her		
825	Nout bote tuo ȝer		
			Ich ȝou wil tel hou.
			Al gode men listen now.
			A king he was jn Jnglond
			Knoud he hete, ich vnderstond.
		1835	Of Jnglond he hadde þe haluendel
			& seynt Edmound þat oþer del.
			& seþþe þurth envie
			& Edriche trecherie
			Seynt Edmund was þurth-schote -
		1840	Þat dede her soules litel note.
			Þe arwes on him so þik þai schett
			Þat ich point oþer mett,
			For þat Jnglond þurthout
			Schuld falle to king Knoud.
		1845	Seþþe his heued was of smite,
			Y wil wele þat ȝe it wite,
			Þan he was birid in Cristchirche
			Þer men Godes werkes wirche
			& now at Biri, ywis, [**fol. 314va**]
		1850	Seynt Edmund schrined is.
			Þo men seynt Edmund souȝt
			Ihesu for him miracles wrouȝt:
			Þe heued seyd 'ich am her.'
			A wolf in his clowes it bere
		1855	Ac þe heued non harm he no dede
			Bot wiþ his fet pleyd þermide.
	Þ o heuede kyng Knout		¶ Þo hadde þe king Knoud
	Al þis lond out & out		Al þis lond þurthout.
			He bicome a gode man;
		1860	He no loued no swikedam.
	Þo come þe t*ra*itours of þis lond		Þo com þe traitours of Jnglond
	Þat heden t*ra*ised Edmond		Þat hadde bitraid seynt Edmond
830	Ant sla wen him to deȝe		& yslawe him to þe ded,
	Þourh Edriches rede		Þurth Edriche conseyl & his red,

	Ant were iolif & proud	1865	Þai wer jolif & proud
	Ant tolden hit to kyng Knout		& told it to þe king Knoud
	Ffor heore foule tresoun		Of her foule tresoun.
835	Hy wenden habbe warisoun		Þai wende to han hadde her warisoun.
	Ah Knout wes a god mon ·		Þe king was riȝtwise man;
	Ant made he*m* telle here suykedom ·	1870	He dede hem tel her swikedam
	Ant [for] þat tresoun þat hy dude		
			Biforn heye & lowe;
			He made hem ben aknowe.
	Hy were to drawen y þe stude		He lete hem drawe wiþ stede,
840	Ant þo þourh god resoun		For swiche is traitours mede.
	He ȝeld hem heore tresoun ·		
	¶ Seþe sone after þas	1875	¶ Seþþen sone after þas
	Þer bifel a wonder cas		Þer bifel a wonder cas
	Ant a muche feorlych		Bitvix þe king & Edriche -
			Nas no traitour to him yliche -
845	Bituene þe kyng & Edrich		Bitvix Edriche & þe king
		1880	Þer ros a gret sturbling.
	At Londene in a soler		At Londen in a soler
	Anyht after soper		Aniȝt after þe soper
	Bituene Edrich & þe kyng		
	Aros a repreosing		Striif & chest þer aros;
			Mani kniȝt þerof agros.
850	Sire kyng seide Edrich	1885	'Sir king' seyd Edriche,
	Who wende þat þou were such ·		'Who wende þatow wer swiche?
	Vnderstondest þe noht		Vnderstondestow nouȝt
	Hou dere uchabbe þi loue aboth ·		Hou dere jchaue þi loue bouȝt?
	Ylette bit*ra*ye þilke mon [**fol. 67va**]		Ich lete bitray mi lord
855	Þat muche god me dude on	1890	Þat made me his steward
	Al þe mast*re* of ys lond		Of al his kingriche.
	Al wes in myn hond ·		Ichim dede biswike
	Ant uch him lette sle wiþ gyn		& sle wiþ tresoun & wiþ gin [**fol. 314vb**]
	To make þe kyng after hym ·		To make þe king after him,
860	Ant þou seruest þus me	1895	& now þou striuest wiþ me.
	To wroþerhele ylouede þe		To wroþerhele leued y þe.'
	Þe kyng wes ful sore agromed		¶ Þe king was aschamed
	Ant of ys wordes sinþe aschomed ·		& of his wordes sore agramed
	¶ Sire Edrich seide þe kyng		& seyd, 'Edriche, ich wene wel
865	Þou ne gabbest noþing	1900	Þatow no leyest neuer a del;
			Of þatow art biknowe,
			Biforn heye & lowe,
	Wiþ gile & wiþ suykedom		Þat wiþ gile & swikedom
	Þou lettest þi lord to deþe don ·		Þou lete þi lord to deþ don,
	Þat þe dude muche honour	1905	Þat dede þe so michel anour,
	Ant þou were his t*ra*itour		& tow were his treytour,
870	Ant after t*re*cherie & gile		& after tresoun & gile,
	Me schal ȝelde þe þy whyle		Men schal ȝeld þe þi wile.'
	¶ Þe king him lette bynde		Þer he lete him binde,
	His honden hi*m* bynde	1910	His honden him bihinde,
	Ant his fet also		& his fet also
875	Were bounde bo tuo ·		He lete binde boþe tvo,
	Ant at a windou casten out		& atte windowe kest him out
	Riht doun in to Temese flod ·		Riȝt into Temes flot.
	So endede he his day	1915	Þus ended he his day -
	God ys soule iugge may ·		God his soule iuge may.
880	King Knout in londe her		King Knoud regned tventi ȝer,

	Reignede euene tuenti ȝer		
			To Winchester men him bere.
	[A]**A**fter þilke kyng Knout		After king Knoud
	Reignede his sone Hardeknout	1920	Regned his sone Hardknoud.
	He wes king [Kn]outes sone		
885	Ant a suiþe ioilif gome		
	He reignede her		
			He was a wel duhti kniȝt
			& a man of miche miȝt
			He was a kniȝt swiþe strong
			& wele defended Jnglond
	Euene ahter tuenti ȝer	1925	He regned ix and tventi ȝer
			& was birid at Westminster.
			After him as y ȝou told
			Regned his sone bold.
			Arod, he regned her
		1930	Bot þre mones of a ȝer.
			At seynt Clementes he lis
			Wiþouten Temple Bar, ywis.
	[A]**A**fter him regne Edward		After him regned seynt Edward,
	Knoutessone bastart		Knowdes sone bastart.
890	He wes a god holy mon	1935	He was a blisced king,
	Ant louede wel is C*ri*stendom		He loued God þurth al þing.
			He loued to wirche gode dede, [**fol. 315ra**]
			Þerfore in heuen he haþ his mede.
			¶ It was opon a somers day
		1940	At Westminster as y ȝou tel may
			Seynt Edward stode at his messe
			& sey into heþenesse
			Hou þe king of Danmark
			Wiþ his ost store & stark
		1945	At ȝernmouþe cum seyland
			To fiȝt wiþ him [in] Jnglond.
			He seye an angel fram heuen liȝt
			Cum adoun þat was so briȝt
			He smot her mast ropes atvo
		1950	Þat al þai gradde walewo.
			After þat he seye anon
			A storm of weder rise sone
			& drof so in her sayles
			Þat þai drenched eueri tayles.
		1955	Seint Edward seye hem end wiþ schame,
			Þerfore he lowe & hadde gode game.
			Þe prest atte masse was wel wo,
			He wende þe king him scorned þo.
			As Seynt Edward atte masse stod
		1960	He seye our lord in flesche & blod,
			Atte prestes leuacioun,
			& hou he suffred passioun
			For him & for al mankinde.
			Of dedelich sinne God ous vnbinde
		1965	ȝif ani of ous þerin be.
			Amen siggeþ par charite.
			¶ Seynt Edward wepe swiþe sore
			& crid ‘lord, merci, þin ore.’
	He reignede her		

	Ffourantuenti ȝer		Seynt Edward regned þritti ȝer
	Ant six moneþ al so [**fol. 67vb**]		
895	At Westmunster he deȝede þo	1970	& was schrined at Westminster.
	[S]**S**eþe reignede a god gome		Seþþe regned a gode gome,
	Harald Godwyne sone		Harold Godewines sone.
	He wes cleped Harefot		He was cleped Harefot
	For he wes vrnare god ·		For he was rennere gode.
900	He ne reignede her		
	Bote nyȝe moneþ of a ȝer		
	Willam Bastard of Norm*andie*	1975	Willam bastard of Normondye
	[Þ]**Þ**o com wiþ gret cheualerie		
	Will*am* Bastard of Normandie		
	Ant Engelond al he won ·		
905	Ant hueld hit ase ys kynedom ·		
	King harald he ouercom		Him slouȝ, & þat was vilanie.
	Ant lette him to deþe don		
	¶ Kyng Harald ful ywys		
	At Waltham yburied ys ·		Harold liþe at Waltham.
910	Ant þenne Will*am* Bastard		& Willam bastard þat þis lond wan
	Hueld al þis lond to hys part		
	Ant þo he made sauntȝ fayle		
	Þe abbaye of þe bataille ·		
	¶ Will*am* Bastard wes kyng her		He regned here
915	On & tuenti fulle ȝer	1980	On & tventi ful ȝer
	Seþe he deȝede at ham		& seþþe he dyed at ham [**fol. 315rb**]
	Jn Normondie at Caham		In Normondye at Cam.
	[A]**A**fter his endyng		After his ending
	Reignede William þe rede kyng		Regnede William þe red king.
		1985	He was his eldest sone,
			& a wel sterne lokeand gome.
920	He wes luþer ant vnwrest		He was liþer & vnwrest
	He made a newe forest		For in þe Newe Forest
	Fifti moder chirchen & mo		Fifti moder chirche & to
	He lette falle & chapeles bo	1990	He lete doun felle & chapels bo,
	Ant clene casten a doun		& clene kest al adoun,
925	Ant made wode þer wos toun		& made wode þat er was toun.
	Þat dude his soule lite note		He dede his soule litel note:
	Ffor seþe þerinne he was yschote		In þat forest he was yschote
	Wiþ an arewe kene & smert	1995	Wiþ an arwe ken & smert
	Þat wes ydrawe to an hert		Þat was yd[r]awe to an hert.
930	Water Tyrel þe arewe droh [**fol. 68ra**]		Water Tirel þat arwe drouȝ,
	Ant þe kyng þer unde he sloh		& þerwiþ þe king he slouȝ.
			& for þat ich foule meschaunce
		2000	In Jnglond was gret destaunce.
			Þurth fals conseyl & wiked red
			Mani a man suffred ded,
			Þurth falsnis & procouring
			Of William broþer þe red king.
		2005	¶ Þilke William regned here
	He reignede þrettene ȝer		On & tuenti ful ȝer.
	To Wynchestre me him ber		At Winchester liþe his bon
			Ybirid in a marbel ston.
	[S]**S**eþe reignede an oþer		After him regned anoþer,
935	Henry ys oune broþer	2010	Sir Henry his owen broþer.
			He was a swiþe duhti kniȝt
			& al men he held to riȝt.

	He reignede her		
	Euene fiue þritti ȝer		He regned tventi ȝer,
	Henry þilke kyng		
	Lyth yburied at Reding ·		To Redinges men him ber.
940	[S]**S**eþe wel euene	2015	After him wel euen
	Reignede kyng Steuene ·		Regned king Steuen
			Þerl sone Bloyes he was.
			Al to sone he died, allas,
			For he no loued no vilanie
		2020	No falsnisse no trecherie
			Bot al godenisse þat was to do,
			Gladeliche he asent þerto.
	He reignede her ·		
	Euene tuenti ȝer		¶ Ac he no regned bot ten ȝer
	He wes a god holi man		
945	Ant wes buried at Ffaue*r*sh*a*m		To Feuersam men him ber.
	[A]**A**fter him reignede Henry	2025	After him regned king Harry [**fol. 315va**]
	God mon & hardy		A gode man & an hardy,
	Þe erles sone of Champaigne		Þerls sone of Champeyne.
	Ant a mon of muche mayne		He was a man of miche mayn.
950	His moder ase ȝe habbeþ herd herþis		
	Hyhte Mahaud þe emp*re*is ·		
	He reignede her		
	Euene four & þritti ȝer		He regned þritti ȝer;
		2030	To Winchester men him ber.
	¶ Þilke Henry þe kyng		
955	Dude a suiþe wonder þing		
	Þo he heuede reigned her		
	Sixtene fulle ȝer		
	He made take Henry ys sone		
	Ant c*ro*unen hi*m* king at Londone		
960	Ant þo in Englond kynges were		
	Tuey Henryes þat crounen bere ·		
	Ant whil þe sone aliue wes		
	Bituene he*m* wes lute pes		
	Ah þe sone ycrouned her		
965	Liuede þrettene ȝer		
	¶ After Henr*i* þe sones deþe		
	Henr*i* þe fader liuede vnneþe ·		
	Vyf ȝer in Engelond [**fol. 68rb**]		
	Ant hueld þis lond in ys hond		
970	Ant þah þe sone croune bere		
	Þe fader hueld is date here		
	Ant al Engelond yhol		
	Al to is oune dol ·		
	¶ Þe erchebischop Seint Thomas		
975	Jn heore time martyred was		
	Þo deȝede þe fader Henri her		
	Þat reignede xxxiiij ȝer ·		
			Seþþe regned anoþer,
			Henry his owhen broþer.
			In his time seyn Thomas
			For Godes loue martird was
		2035	At Caunterbiri toforn þe auter ston.
			He doþ miracles mani on.

[P]**Þ**o anon afterward
Reignede ys sone Richard ·
980 Richard queor de lyoun
Þat wes his sournoun
Ah he reigned her
Bote vnneþe ten ȝer ·

Þilke Henry liþe at Fonteneurard,

& seþþe regned king Richard;

For soþe, as ich vnderstond,
2040 He wan Acres into his hond,
& ichil ȝou tel in what maner.
Listeneþ al þat ben here
He purueyd him of kniȝtes strong
Of þe best þat weren in lond
2045 & men þat couþe of wer & fiȝt,
Boþe bi day & bi niȝt,
& after þat, wiþouten faile,
He purueyd him vitaile,
Bred & flour win & ale.
2050 He charged schippes gret & smale,
& afterward of timber long
He lete make a castel strong
To stonden in þe tour an heye
& se w[h]at men doþ fer & neye.
2055 Þer he seye in priuete
What Sarraȝines dede in þe cite.
When it was wrouȝt fair & wel
He lete charge schipes þerwiþ eueri del
& al þing þat fel þerto;
2060 Al þiis he dede þo.
Afterward he purueyd him
Of led a wel queint gin,
Joyned wel wiþ yren & stiel.
Þerin was sett þe castel
2065 Wel depe in þe se grounde,
Þer he kept it hole & sounde;
Boþe in eb & in flowe
Fro þe castel þe wawes gan stowe.
ȝete he purueyd him o be hiue, [**fol. 315vb**]
2070 Schippes ful seuen score & fiue,
& drouȝ vp her seyles gode
& passed ouer þe salt flod.
King Richard lift vp his hond
& seyd ‘lord ous be among,
2075 And al þe compeynie of heuen.
Ihesu Crist, þou here mi steuen.
For þi loue y make þis viage,
To ȝeld þine enemis her wage,
Þat stedefast nil nouȝt leue on þe.
2080 Þerfore, Ihesu, help þou me.’
Whan he com neye at Acres toun
Þe gin þan he lete adoun
Into þe ground of þe flod
& made þeron a castel gode.
2085 It was boþe gode & strong.
Swiche nas non in al þat lond;
Of tventi stages it was heye,

	Men miȝt þerin se fer & neye. When it was wrouȝt fair & wel 2090 He sett þerin a mangonel Þat þurth queyntise of mannes strengþe It miȝt cast þre mile o lengþe. Þe joinour þat it hadde to ȝeme He purueyd king Richard to queme. 2095 Anon he tok him þe be hiue & into Acres slong hem biliue. Of þe hiues gret plente He slong into þat fair cite. Þe weder was hot in somers tide, 2100 Þe ben brust out bi ich a side Þat wer anoied & ful of grame; Þai dede þe Sarraȝins miche schame, For þai hem stong in her vissage Þat al þai bigun to rage 2105 & hedde hem al in depe celer Þat þai durst com no nerer. Þilke Richard our king Dede make a queynter þing, Windemilles in schippes houend on water 2110 Sailed about wiþ brenand tapre, Hongend wiþ vice made wel queynt Þat non of hem miȝt out teynt. Þe sailes wer red ȝalu & grene, [**fol. 316ra**] Wel griseliche þing ariȝt to sen. 2115 Þe Sarraȝins seye þat mervaile, Þai no durst abide to ȝif batayle. Þai seyden hem ichon among, ‘Lordinges, to dyen it wer strong, For þis is þe deuel of helle 2120 Þat wil ous euerichon aquelle; Þerfore fle we al bi time Oþer we schul haue iuel fine.’ Of hem alle nas lasse no more Þat longer durst abide þore. 2125 Fast þai gun oway to drawe For dout of deþ to ben yslawe. ¶ King Richard þo vp stode & bad his kniȝtes of hert gode For to liue & for to daye, 2130 Þus he gan to hem to say, ‘Lordinges curteys & hende Now is time þat we wende To awreke our lord of his fon. Oliue no late ȝe neuer on, 2135 & wiþ þe grace of Marie sone His enemis we schal ouercome.’ King Richard ariued to þe lond, Ac first he smot a dint wel strong Wiþ his ax a cheyne of þre; 2140 Al þat þer were miȝt it se. Swiche a dent as he smot þer In lond nas smiten neuer er. Þo went king Richard into þe toun

	He no fond Sarraȝin, ȝalu no broun,
	2145 Heye no lowe, non so kene
	Þat he ne orderd hem al bidene.
	When þai were slawe euerichon
	He seyd to king Philip anon
	& to his kniȝtes hende & fre,
	2150 ‘Lordinges, wonne is þis cite.
	Now it is in Cristen hond.
	Lord, y þanke him of his sond.
	Ac wende we forþ to Ierusalem
	& to þe toun of Bedelem
	2155 & winne it into Cristen hond.
	Our lord ous euer be among.
	¶ King Philip & king Richard [**fol. 316rb**]
	Went hem þo þiderward,
	& as þai went bi þe way
	2160 King Richard to him gan say,
	‘ȝif ich may win þis fair cite,
	Who schal þerof lord holden be?’
	King Philip oȝain a[n]sword
	Þerof he wald be holden lord.
	2165 Schortliche he seyd at wordes þre
	He wald haue þerof þe dignite
	& lord be of al þat þing
	‘As ich am trewe kniȝt & king.’
	¶ King Richard seyd ‘schal it so be.
	2170 Þine owhen men þou take wiþ þe
	& wende now forþ & it winne
	Wiþ þi queyntise & þi ginne.’
	King Richard tok an alblast strong
	& bent it wiþ his owen hond;
	2175 A quarel clouen þerin he sett
	& in þe clift a besant do he lete.
	He sent it in signifiaunce
	God himselue to honouraunce.
	Þe quarel he squached to Ierusalem.
	2180 To Acres he turned oȝen
	& stabled it in Cristen hond
	& seþþe com toward Jnglond.
	He was a duhti kniȝt & bold,
	In ich lond wele of told.
¶ Seþe he was yschote alas	2185 Seþþe he was schoten allas
985 At castel gailard þer he was	In Castel Gailar þer he was.
At Fontenerard liggeþ his bon	
	¶ King Richard regned here
	Fourtene ful ȝer.
	After him sone anon
[S]**S**eþe reignede king Jon ·	2190 Regned þe king Jon.
Jn is time al engelonde	In his time al Jnglond
Wes entredited wiþ wronge	Was entredit in his hond,
990 Þourh an erchebischop	For an erchebischop,
Þat wes wis mon & nout sot	A wise man & no sot,
He hihte Steuene of Longedon	2195 Steuen he hete of Langtone,
Þe kyng him nolde vnderfon ·	Þe king him nold not vnderfone.
	Sone anon after þat
	He com ride in at Bischopesȝat

He seye a flecher sitt þerat.
2200 He biheld & vnderȝat
Hou he gan to prie **[fol. 316va]**
& tvincle wiþ þat oþer eye.
King Jon seyd þo,
'Flecher, whi lokestow so?'
2205 Þe flecher answerd oȝain,
'Sir, for soþe, ichil ȝou seyn.
So help me God & seynt Miȝhel
For it schuld be euen & wel.
So help me God & Seyn Austin
2210 Y no dede it for non oþer gin.'
¶ King Jon dede as a schrewe
He de[de] put out his on eyȝe
For he no schuld nomore prinke
No wiþ þat oþer eyȝe winke.
2215 ȝete he dede more schrewednisse:
For a prest nold nouȝt sing his messe
In þat time þat Jnglond
Was entreditt jn his hond,
He dede him held al quic wiþ mayn
2220 Þat was a swiþe hard payn.
Þe folk made þerfore miche sorwe
Þerfro miȝt him no man borwe.
It was a swiþe wicke dede,
Þerfore in helle he has his mede.
2225 He was ful wroþ & grim
For no prest wald sing for him.
He made þo his parlement
& swore his croyde verrament
Þat he schuld make swiche a saut
2230 To fede al Jnglond wiþ a spaud
& eke wiþ a white lof;
Þerfore ich hop he was God loþ.
¶ A monk it herd of Swinesheued
& of þis wordes he was adred
2235 He went hom to his fere
& seyd to hem in þis maner,
'Þe king has made a sori oþ
Þat he schal wiþ a white lof
Fede al Jnglond, & wiþ a spaud.
2240 Ywis it were a sori saut,
& better is þat we dye bo
Þan al Jnglond be so wo.
ȝe schul for me belles ring
& afterwardes rede & sing,
2245 So helpe ȝou God heuen-king. **[fol. 316vb]**
Graunteþ me alle now min asking
& ichim wil wiþ puseoun slo.
No schal he neuer Jnglond do wo.'
His breþer him graunt alle his bone,
2250 He lete him schriue swiþe sone
To make his soule fair & clene
Tofor our leuedi, heuen-quen,
Þat sche schuld for him be
Toforn hir sone in trinite.

		2255	¶ Dan Simound ȝede & gadred frut,
			Forsoþe were ploumes white;
			Þe steles he puld out euerichon,
			Pusoun he dede þerin anon
			& sett þe steles al oȝen
		2260	Þat þe gile schuld nouȝt be sen.
			He dede hem in a coupe of gold
			& went to þe kinges bord.
			On knes he him sett,
			Þe king ful fair he gret,
		2265	'Sir' he seyd 'bi seynt Austin,
			Þis is frout of our gardin;
			& ȝif þat ȝour wille be
			Asayet hereof after me.'
			Dan Simound ete frut on & on
		2270	& al þo oþer ete king Jon.
			Þe monke aros & went his way.
			God ȝif his soule wel go[de] day -
			He ȝaf king Jon þer his pu[i]soun,
			Himselue hadde þat ilke doun.
		2275	He dede it noiþer for niþe no ond
			Bot for to saue al Jnglond.
			¶ As king Jon sat atte mete
			His wombe gan to wex grete,
			He swore his oþ, par la croyde,
		2280	His wombe wald brest a þre.
			He wald haue risen fram þe bord
			Ac he no spac neuer more word.
			Þus ended his time,
			Ywis, he hadde an euel fine.
	He reignede seuentene ȝer	2285	¶ King Jon regned tvelue ȝer,
995	To Wyrcestre me him ber		To Worcestre men him ber.
	[A]**A**fter him reignede Henry		After him regned king Henri,
	A god kyng ant holy ·		A gode man & an holy;
			He loued better for to wirche [**fol. 317ra**]
		2290	Boþe chapels & holy chirche
			Þan he dede castels oþer tours
			Oþer heye halles peynted wiþ floures.
			Of al time þat he ledde his liif
			He loued noiþer fiȝt no striif.
	Jn his time wes werre strong	2295	ȝete þer was wer strong
	Ant gret strif in Engelond ·		& miche striif in Jnglond.
1000	Bituene þe barouns & þe kyng		
	Wes gret strynyng		
	For þe p*ur*ueaunce of Oxueford ·		
			Þurth fals conseyl & wicked red
	Þat sire Simoun de Montfort		Simond Mufort was brout to ded,
	Meintenede ant gode lawes		For he wald haue þe gode lawe,
1005	Þer fore he les his lyf dawes	2300	Þerfore he was brouȝt o liue dawe.
	¶ He reigned her		King Henry regned here
	Lvj folle ȝer		Seuen & fifti ful ȝer.
	Ant tuenti dawes þer to		
	At Westminst*re* he wes leid þo		At Westminster liþ his bon
			Biloken in a marbel ston.
1010	[S]**S**eþe reigned a god gome	2305	After þis king ichaue of told
			Regned a king swiþe bold,

Edward his oune sone	Edward he hete sikerly,
	Þe kinges sone Henri.
He was ucleped conquerour	
God ʒeue his soule muchel honour	
Jn werre com he neuer ywys	
1015 Þat he ne hade þe meste p*ri*s	
	He was a wel duhti kniʒt
	2310 For wele he held Jnglond to riʒt,
	For þat Brut wan to his hond,
	Inglond, Wales & Scottlond,
	He nold forlese non of hem alle
	For noþing þat miʒt bifalle.
	2315 First Wales he wan to him
	& slouʒ Dauid & Lewlin,
	& seþþe forsoþe, ich vnderstond,
	He wan to him Scotlond.
	Jch ʒou telle, wiþouten faile,
	2320 Wiþ dent of swerd in bataile
	Þer nas no kniʒt of hem so strong
	Þat he ne made hem bowe to his hond;
	Oþer wiþ loue oþer wiþ eyʒe
	Forsoþe he dede as y ʒou say.
	2325 He wald haue won more þan so
	ʒif he miʒt haue hadde liif þerto.
	Y no can telle ʒou wiþ no voice
	Hou lef him hadde ben to win þe croice
	Þat is in þe heþen lond.
	2330 God sende it into Cristen hond.
	Alle þat for his soule pray
	& wiþ gode hert say
	{about 9 lines lost}
	Of cristendom he bar þe flour
	In wer no com he neuer, ywis,
	2335 Þat he no bar oway þe priis.
¶ He reigned her [fol. 68va]	¶ He regned fif & fifti ʒer
Xxxv fulle ʒer	
	& was ybirid ad Westminster.
Ahte moneþ & dawes þre ·	
Jn Engelond king wes he ·	
1020 Þ o anon afterward	
Reignede hys sone Edward ·	
Þilke Edward sauntʒ fayle	
Ʒef þe erldome of Conwayle	
To sire Pieres of Gauaston	
1025 Þat for enuie was ynome	
Þe lordinges of Engelonde	
To him heueden gret onde	
Ffor he wes wel wiþ þe kyng	
Heo heueden hi*m* in heuyng	
1030 Ant seiden he wes t*ra*itour	
To þe king & to heore honour	
Ant for he wes louerd suyke	
Heo ladden him to Warewyke	
At Gaueressich ʒe mowe wyte	
1035 Þer his heued wes of smyte ·	
	After him regned a stalworþ man,

	Edward his sone of Carnervan. 2340 He les his lond, saun faile, Þurth his wicked conseyle, Þurth sir Howe þe Spenser, Þat was his wicked conseyller. ¶ He no regned here 2345 Bot eyȝtetene ȝere. At Berkele dyed þe king, At Glowcester is his biriing. Now Ihesu Crist & seyin Richard Saue þe ȝong king Edward 2350 & ȝif him grace his lond to ȝeme Þat it be Ihesu Crist to queme & leue him so for to wirche Þurth þe lore of holi chirche Þat God þermid apaied be 2355 Þer he sett in his trinite; & ȝif him miȝt & grace Him to venge in eueriche place Oȝaines his enemis wiche þat it be. God it him graunt par charite 2360 Þurth his hates þat be ten. Say we now alle amen.

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